

REMARKS BY HONOURABLE PREMIER ES MCHUNU ON THE OCCASION OF VISITING SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILIES WHO LOST THEIR LOVED ONES DURING INCIDENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONALS ON 2 MAY 2015.

Minister Jeff Radebe and the entire Inter-Ministerial Committee

MEC Mchunu and colleagues in the Provincial Inter-Ministerial Committee

Mayor James Nxumalo

Provincial Commissioner and Top Management of SAPS

Members of the Bereaved Families

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the people of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, we welcome the visit by the Inter-Ministerial Committee to come and pay the last respect to the affected families on behalf of Government of the Republic of South Africa.

This visit is important in that it highlights the cost of that ugly conflict we experienced over the last few weeks, which caused so much pain to the people of this country and the entire world. It brings home the point that in that senseless violence, which had been characterised as xenophobic in nature, the whole of humanity was the main loser.

Government was accused in some quarters as having gone out of its way to protect foreign nationals at the expense of the plight of its own citizens. The reality is that we understood fully that the results of violence are indiscriminate, hence we emphasised during the crisis that first and foremost, our primary task was to protect life irrespective of whose life it is and origins of persons. Secondly, we said violence must end so that we resolve whatever grievances may be there, as violence always produces negative outcomes with devastating implications to the standing of our society.

Indeed, we did everything in our power to effect this including programmes to reintegrate the displaced back to their communities, which included assisting those who chose to go back to their countries of origin. All those who were displaced and found themselves in the temporary shelters, were provided with support including

tents, healthcare provision, psycho-social counselling, security and provision of basic necessities like water.

We thank broader members of our communities and non-governmental organisations like the International Red Cross and the Gift of the Givers, who came forward and provided support in the form of clothes, personal hygiene packs, raw food supplies, cooked meals, blankets, sponges, and medical supplies. Their support gave an added impetus to the interventions by government.

This kind of violence does not represent who we are as a society. It also does not mean that government is failing in its duty to deliver services to the people and growing economic opportunities necessary to eradicate our triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Instead, it compounds our challenges as its implications are far-reaching. It has caused serious reputational damage to South Africa in the eyes of the world. At the local level, it led to disruption of the informal economic system that supports poorer communities. It undermines our drive in building social cohesion in our country particularly in poorer communities. Above all, it is a breeding ground for opportunistic criminal activities.

We will continue to do all that is expected of the state to provide security to its people and above all, create an environment that is conducive for the people of South Africa to exploit economic opportunities we create as government for them to better their lives. We once again express our sincere condolences to all who lost their loved ones. We will intensify our efforts to reintegrate those who have been displaced and in the process lost their belongings as well.

Minister Radebe, kindly express our appreciation to President Zuma for his leadership during this trying period. We thank him for also taking dialogue to his counterparts at relevant international fora, on how we deal overall with issues of immigration in a sustainable manner.

I thank you.