



Press Statement: Outbreak of xenophobic violence in South Africa

attributable to the Acting Resident Coordinator United Nations in South Africa

Pretoria, 20 May 2008...The United Nations organizations in South Africa are deeply concerned about the continuing xenophobic related violent attacks against foreign nationals and some South Africans living in the province of Gauteng over the past several days. Several people have been killed and many, including children, injured and left homeless. Equally of concern are the violence and xenophobia that have been on going in other parts of SA in past months.

The United Nations organizations recognize that many of the victims are refugees and asylum seekers seeking a safe and better life for their families. We remain gravely concerned at the prospect of further escalation in violence especially against the most vulnerable including children and poor families.

In this regard the United Nations organisations in South Africa recognize and appreciate the condemnation of such violence by the highest political and governmental authorities, including the President of the Republic and other senior and influential individuals of the country. Furthermore the deployment of more police to affected areas to restore order and bring an end to violence is most welcome.

The Heads of Agencies of United Nations organisation in South Africa would like to lend their voice to the condemnation of the violence and implore the security forces of South Africa, together with community leaders, to bring these attacks to an immediate cessation. The United Nations organisations in South Africa stand ready to provide assistance and support for immediate humanitarian needs faced by the victims of attacks as well as to find medium and long term solutions to the unfolding developments.

Ends

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. C.', is written above the date.

20. May 2008