FORUM: Human Rights Council

QUESTION OF: Measures to Address Xenophobia and Promote Social Cohesion in South Africa

MAIN SUBMITTER: Finland

CO-SUBMITTERS: Australia, Syria, Philippines, Côte d’Ivoire, Chad, Uruguay, Zambia, Senegal

The Human Rights Council,

*Alarmed* by the recent increase in xenophobic incidents within South Africa, resulting in displacements and violence towards immigrant communities,

*Recognizing* that socio-economic disparities and historical legacies, such as apartheid, continue to fuel tensions between native South Africans and immigrant populations,

*Acknowledging* the failure of certain governmental policies to provide adequate resources and support to both South African citizens and immigrant communities, which exacerbates xenophobia,

*Further emphasizing* the need for collaborative efforts from international organizations, NGOs, and member states to promote social cohesion and reduce xenophobia in South Africa,

*Bearing in mind* the foreigners being targets for everyday harassment and discrimination,

*Aware* that 62% of South Africans expressed negative emotion toward foreigners living and working in South Africa,

1. Urges the South African government to implement education programs focused on diversity and inclusivity by:

a. Integrating anti-xenophobia and cultural awareness topics into the national school curriculum:

 i. Developing age-appropriate modules for primary, secondary, and high school students,

 ii. Training teachers on effective methods to teach inclusivity, also workshops in schools that focus on the importance of diverse cultures,

 iii. Including cultural exchange activities in school programs,

b. Partnering with local NGOs and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to provide community programs that promote understanding among different ethnic groups and dismantle stereotypes by engaging local leaders and influencers to foster community dialogues about the effects of xenophobia,

c. Developing public campaigns to raise awareness and educate the locals about the positive contributions of foreigners to South African society by:

 i. Creating informative posters in public spaces,

 ii. Broadcasting awareness campaigns on national TV and radio,

 iii. Using social media platforms to reach broader audiences;

2. Recommends that international organizations, including the African Union (AU) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and International Labor Organization (ILO) to support South Africa in reducing economic tensions and improving employment that contribute to xenophobia by:

a. Creating more job opportunities to enhance economic stability and ease the competitive dynamic between the foreigners and the locals in such ways but not limited to:

 i. Developing their system by promoting different kinds of attractions in South Africa to create jobs related to accommodation and transportation,

 ii. Arranging big building projects to increase the rate of employment from hiring the unemployed citizens as laborers,

b. Supporting and promoting entrepreneurship and small businesses to create new jobs to improve economic stability using ways such as:

 i. Supplying affordable office space,

 ii. Providing mentorship program to help them learn the basic skills of entrepreneurship,

 iii. Offering micro-loans for small business start-ups,

 iv. Setting up a government fund to provide low-interest loans,

 v. Partnering with private investors to create grants for small enterprises,

c. Implementing expert training and employment programs relevant to job market for both the locals and the foreigners to equip everyone with enhanced potential for employment which will also create a joint economic venture where they employ locals and foreigners all equally to build trust through shared goals;

3. Establishes the Social Cohesion Fund (SCF) under the oversight of the United Nations Development Programmed (UNDP) to support initiatives in South Africa that address xenophobia and promote social integration through means such as but not limited to:

a. Structured contributions from developed nations, regional bodies like the African Union (AU), and international corporations operating in South Africa:

i. determined based on each country’s Gross National Income (GNI) to ensure equitable distribution,

ii. Supplemented by matching funds from the private sector, especially companies in sectors reliant on migrant labor,

iii. Include special contributions from countries hosting large South African expatriate communities to encourage reciprocal support,

b. Annual audits and transparency measures led by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), detailing fund allocation to maximize accountability,

c. Allocations for grassroots initiatives that directly address xenophobia, with focus areas such as but not limited to:

i. Community integration programs for foreign nationals,

ii. Economic development projects targeting areas affected by xenophobic violence,

iii. Support for South African communities impacted by high levels of foreigners,

4. Recommends the South African government to foster foreigners-involved opportunities in such ways but not limited to:

a. Organizing a variety of events that encourages foreigners and the locals to collaborate, thereby enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation, such as but not limited to:

 i. Hosting sports competitions open to participants from all nations and all ages within South Africa to foster teamwork and camaraderie between the locals and the foreigners,

 ii. Arranging yearly cultural festivals in South Africa to celebrate and understand the diverse backgrounds of both locals and foreigners,

b. Developing programs and workshops where the locals and the foreigners can share about their own experience and perspectives to help the locals dispel misunderstandings toward the foreigners,

c. Establishing free summer camps to other countries for the local students facilitated by organizations such as Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF) and People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty (PASSOP), for the students to experience and understand the cultural background of the foreigners;

5. Insists the South African government to work more on promoting the positive contributions of the foreigners to overcome the prejudice developed by the locals in such ways but not limited to:

a. Utilizing social media to upload the positive influences of the foreigners, including:

 i. Foreigners contributing skills, labor, and investment that can boost the local economies also leading to increased job opportunities,

 ii. Foreigners bringing specialized skills, knowledge, and innovations that contribute to local education and support the growth of successful businesses,

 iii. Encouraging media outlets to showcase success stories of foreigners who positively impact their communities,

b. Leveraging newspaper articles to further promote and elucidate the positive contributions of foreigners while also collaborating with fact-checking organizations to ensure accurate information is disseminated and mitigate the spreading of false or negative information about the foreigners;

6. Requests the South Africa government to create a “Victim Support Network” in collaboration with NGOs and UNHCR, designed to assist individuals affected by xenophobic violence and protect foreigners through:

a. Mental health and trauma counseling services provided by international health organizations, aimed at:

 i. Supporting immediate victims of xenophobic attacks,

 ii. Providing long-term mental health resources to aid recovery,

 iii. Training local mental health workers to handle xenophobia-related trauma,

b. Temporary safety shelters with security measures in place, funded by the Social Cohesion Fund, to offer refuge to at-risk individuals,

c. Legal aid services with representatives from UNHCR and IOM, offering free or subsidized legal assistance for victims to help them navigate protective rights and asylum applications,

d. Developing additional closed-circuit television systems and improving reporting mechanisms for foreigners who are experiencing xenophobic attacks from locals;

7. Urges the South African government to strengthen the legal framework governing racial discrimination or hate speech directed at foreigners to protect them from hate crimes from such ways but not limited to:

a. Strengthening the punishment for racial harassment, currently punished by fine or imprisonment for a maximum of five years, through means such as but not limited to:

 i. Raising the fines,

 ii. Extending the maximum time of imprisonment to ten years,

b. Reinforcing the homicide law, which currently requires a minimum of 15 years of imprisonment to a minimum of 20 years of imprisonment,

c. Enforcing stricter penalties for hate crimes against foreigners to deter future incidents, including:

 i. Fines and mandatory sensitivity training for first-time offenders,

 ii. Harsher sentencing for repeat offenders,

 iii. Establishing a database for tracking hate crime statistics;

8. Suggests the South African government to enhance its trade and cooperate initiatives with a various range of countries, leading to increased interaction between the locals and foreigners thus help the locals develop a deeper understanding of foreign cultures and overcome hate or fear toward the foreigners through such ways but not limited to:

a. Increasing the establishment of foreign companies into South Africa to enhance cooperation with other countries,

b. Leveraging the valuable resources in South Africa by selling and trading it with foreign countries to increase the chance of interaction between the locals and foreigners;

9. Demands the government of South Africa to reduce illegal immigration to serve its citizens better through ways such as but not limited to:

a. Improving immigration laws and enforcing border controls to help reduce the number of unauthorized migrants by:

 i. Increasing security and law enforcement on the borders,

 ii. Pass strict laws that punish illegal immigrants,

b. Encouraging local South Africans to employ or hire legal immigrants in ways such as but not limited to:

 i. Having immigrants provide passports or other authorized identification to prove that they have crossed legally,

 ii. Passing laws that motivate local South Africans to hire legal immigrants through financial benefits or tax reductions for businesses that prioritize the employment of individuals with verified legal status,

c. Inviting South Africa to collaborate with legal organizations to provide easy access to documentation for both immigrants and citizens in South Africa by creating more immigration offices to document people that are staffed by South Africans;

10. Recommends that the South African government enhance data collection and community engagement efforts to address xenophobia by:

a. Collecting and analyzing data on xenophobic incidents to better understand their impact on local communities, identify trends, and inform policy making,

b. Reporting findings to the Human Rights Council to facilitate international support and further action, when necessary,

c. Engaging community leaders in identifying and implementing solutions to promote social cohesion by:

 i. Holding regular town hall meetings to address community concerns,

 ii. Conducting surveys to assess public attitudes towards immigrants and identifying areas needing focused interventions.