

18 June 2026**SAFCEI statement condemning Xenophobia**

As a multifaith organisation, SAFCEI (Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute) joins in solidarity with communities across Southern Africa in condemning the recent xenophobic and Afrophobic violence, intimidation, and discrimination directed at migrants, refugees, and foreign nationals in South Africa.

There can be no justification for violence, hatred, or intolerance towards people based on their nationality, ethnicity, language or place of origin. Across our faith traditions, we are called upon to welcome the stranger, protect the vulnerable, and uphold the dignity of every person. Xenophobia violates these sacred values and undermines the spirit of Ubuntu that binds us together.

Xenophobia benefits no one. Stoking fear, resentment, and division will not create more jobs, reduce poverty, improve public services, or make communities safer. Instead, it fuels violence and breaks down our social fabric by fermenting a lack of trust, threats and intimidation. Xenophobia is a distraction from the real challenges facing South Africa, including inequality, corruption, poor governance, economic injustice and the escalating impacts of climate change.

The people, economies, and communities of Southern Africa are deeply interconnected. Our societies are strengthened by diversity, cooperation, and solidarity, not weakened by them.

Attempts to scapegoat migrants for complex social and economic challenges are harmful, misleading, and dangerous, and unfortunately have been used time and time again by politicians seeking to further their own aims, not to the benefit of society.

Borders in Africa were created by vested interests during colonial times and were arbitrary. South Africans who are angry and frustrated about the lack of jobs, progress, housing and other basic services should direct their concerns to the appropriate authorities, not towards their neighbours and local businesses who have not created the problems being faced.

We call on political leaders, faith communities, civil society organisations, and all people of goodwill to reject hate speech, misinformation, and violence in all its forms. We must work together to build peaceful, inclusive communities where everyone can live in safety, dignity, and mutual respect.