

URGENT ACTION

CALM RETURNS TO MAMELODI BUT FEARS REMAIN

No further attacks have been reported in Mamelodi, Pretoria since 12 June. However hundreds of Somali and Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers remain displaced and concern remains for their immediate welfare and their ability to re-integrate back into the community in the long-term.

The attacks on over 100 shops in the wider Mamelodi area between 7 and 11 June left at least 275 men, women and children displaced from their homes and livelihoods. Most of those affected are Somali nationals. The majority are staying in over-crowded temporary accommodation provided by refugee groups and there is grave concern about their immediate humanitarian needs (food, blankets, and toiletries). There is also wider concern about their long-term well-being and their ability to return to their homes and businesses.

Despite some condemnation of the attacks by high-level authorities, initial discussions with local stake-holders in Mamelodi indicate that the displaced refugees and asylum-seekers are not welcome to return at this time. There are some signals that the attacks may have been driven by political rivalries in the local area. There is concern that this situation would put anyone of the displaced who attempt to return in the near future at continued risk, without effective policing interventions.

Amnesty International is part of a joint civil society initiative to provide assistance to the displaced and will continue to monitor the situation.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Expressing concern about the resurgence of attacks, property violence and forced evictions of refugees (including asylum seekers) in the Mamelodi area;
- Calling on authorities to ensure that the South African Police Service provides protection and impartial and professional services to all people living within its jurisdiction. All police station commanders in the province should be equipped with clear and consistent standing orders to protect the lives and property of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants against perpetrators of organised violence, looting and threatened or actual forcible closures of their shops;
- Calling on authorities at all levels to uphold South Africa's obligations to protect the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 AUGUST 2014 TO:

Cluster Commander, Mamelodi Cluster

South African Police Service

Major General G.D. Seswike

PO Box 55

Mamelodi West, 0101

South Africa

Fax: +27 12 812 9030

Salutation: Dear Major General

And copies to:

Gauteng Provincial Commissioner

South African Police Service

Lt General L.J. Mothiba

16 Empire Road

Johannesburg, 2017

Fax: + 27 11 274 7312

South Africa

Email: gpprovcomm@saaps.org.za

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 148/14. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR53/001/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Attacks in Mamelodi have occurred against a backdrop of ongoing and widespread targeted violence against refugees and migrants in South Africa. In the first two and a half months of 2014, similar incidents were recorded in seven provinces of South Africa. Around 1,000 refugees and migrants, including family members of shop-keepers, were displaced as a result of looting and destruction of property in 300 small businesses and a number of refugees were reportedly killed. In late March, approximately 600 people were displaced as a result of looting and property destruction in over 150 shops in one single location in Mpumalanga (a province in the east of South Africa). Further incidents have continued to be reported throughout April and May. In some cases, humanitarian, refugee and civil society organisations working with some local or Public Order police units have managed to avert or mitigate the worst effects of this violence.

Amnesty International remains concerned that in the six years since the large-scale violence and displacements of 2008, the South African authorities have not put in place any systematic measures of prevention and protection.

In the absence of systematic measures of prevention and protection, as well as the apparent impunity for the perpetrators, some refugees and migrants have sought to protect themselves with arms. In the past year, at least three community members have alleged to have been involved in attacks were reportedly killed or seriously injured.

Amnesty International has continued to raise its concerns with the South African authorities, at local, provincial and national authorities in recent years and most recently, in a letter to the President in April 2014.

Further information on UA: 148/14 Index: AFR 53/002/2014 Issue Date: 27 June 2014