

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **GOVERNMENT CONDEMNS USE OF FAKE INFORMATION TO FUEL TENSIONS**

The recent acts of criminality that resulted in the displacement of foreign nationals in KZN and Limpopo and harm to some is regrettable. Such acts should be strongly condemned by all peace loving South Africans. This is certainly not how we should be viewed as a country, as these incidents are criminal in nature and have been hijacked by people who fuelled the tensions through fake news on social media.

The JCPS Cluster is working around the clock to address the issue of attacks against foreign nationals. To this end, three people have been arrested for their part in the criminal incidents and law enforcement agencies remain steadfast to bringing the perpetrators responsible for these crimes to book.

Government would like to caution that the spread of misinformation, fake pictures and videos on social media as well as fake websites may be fuelling tensions in our communities between South Africans and foreign nationals.

While government is concerned about the reported incidents of alleged attacks on foreign nationals, we would like to caution South Africans not to be duped to believe everything they read or see on social media that is purported to be about attacks on foreign nationals.

Certain images and videos that appear on social media are old and unrelated to any of the reported incidents of alleged attacks on foreign nationals over the past few days. For instance, a message being circulated about foreign nationals burning South African owned trucks in Limpopo Province is not true.

Government has consistently condemned fake news websites masquerading as authentic news websites. However, the recent spate of the fake online stories which are fuelling tensions between South Africans and foreign nationals calls for greater efforts to raise awareness in society about fake news and fake social media posts.

These fake videos and images on social media as well as websites do not subscribe to any codes of conduct that our media fraternity do and their agendas are directed at ruining the image of South Africa and our relation with our neighbouring countries and the continent.

Government respects the right of freedom of the press and freedom of expression but fake news stories are a slanderous attempt against the brand of South Africa with no interest in respecting the Constitution of South Africa.

We urge South Africa citizens to be vigilant and not spread fake information and images that may give and implication to be attacks on foreign nationals.

South Africa remains committed to the development of the continent hence it continues to support South African companies to invest in Africa. Equally, South Africa views the presence of foreign nationals that are legally registered in the country as part of the respective contribution in growing our economy. The South African government is committed to decisively dealing with criminal elements within our communities.

South Africa is a constitutional democracy governed by laws and as such we expect everyone working and living in the country to be doing so legally and obey South Africa's laws in their totality.

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