

# ITUC - Africa

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AFRICAINNE



**Mody GUIRO**

President  
Président

**Kwasi ADU-AMANKWAH**

General Secretary  
Secrétaire général

Kenya RE Towers, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Upper Hill (Off Ragati Road)

P.O. Box 67273 - Postal Code 00200

**NAIROBI** (Kenya)

Tel: (254-20) 27 103 10 / 34 00 46 / 27 173 08 / 27 173 24

Fax: (254-20) 21 50 72 / 27 103 02

e-mail: [info@ituc-africa.org](mailto:info@ituc-africa.org)

Web: [www.ituc-africa.org](http://www.ituc-africa.org)

# CSI - Afrique

H. E President Thabo Mbeki  
Republic of South Africa  
Pretoria, South Africa.

Through

The High Commissioner  
South African High Commission  
Nairobi, Kenya

May 22, 2008

Your Excellency,

## DEMAND FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION ON XENOPHOBIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MIGRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

On behalf of sixteen million workers organised in 86 affiliated national trade union federations in 45 African countries, the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa) requests you and your Government to take immediate and effective action against the continuing acts of xenophobic violence against migrant workers in various parts of South Africa.

We are outraged that the lives and properties of tens of thousands of innocent migrant workers and their families are subject to hatred and violent attacks. The loss of increasing number of innocent lives, the hundreds of severely wounded and thousands of displaced people and the shock and traumatic effects on all their relatives and others have caused a deep social crisis among the predominantly urban population of South Africa. All efforts are needed to maintain peace in South Africa and to create an enabling environment for a real social integration of the migrant workers in the South African communities.

ITUC-Africa is well aware of the underlying factors which have caused deep frustrations, especially among the younger part of the South African working population. Lack of employment, lack of income, poor housing facilities, insufficient education and the apparent inability of the government to successfully tackle these problems have caused anger and despair among these deprived groups of the South African working population. The absence of a future with a decent life for South Africa's younger generations has now turned against migrant workers, the most vulnerable groups in the South African labour force.

Your government is the first to be responsible and the first to be blamed for these unprecedented outbursts of xenophobic and anti-immigrant feelings.

ITUC-Africa agrees that migrant work can neither be separated from the process of African economic integration nor from the process of globalization. We recognize that migrant work as a feature of open economies comes with challenges and difficulties for many countries, not only for South Africa but for many countries in all regions of the world. It requires well thought out and clear policies to effectively integrate migrant workers in the South African communities. It requires the application of the labour laws to all workers to stamp out shameless exploitation. It requires the maintenance of the rule of law to protect the lives and properties of all. It requires social justice and peaceful and decent lives for all. The perpetrators of the violent attacks have to be arrested and prosecuted.

During the dark era of apartheid, workers across Africa, united in the predecessor organisations of ITUC-Africa, tirelessly contributed to the defeat of the apartheid system. African workers' solidarity strengthened South African workers to take their future in their own hands and to make their country a welcome and safe place to live. The workers organised in ITUC-Africa now demand your immediate and effective action to end the violence and to take all necessary measures to ensure that this xenophobia will no longer pollute the social fabric of your beloved country.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

Yours sincerely



Kwasi Adu-Amankwah  
General Secretary

Cc: The General Secretary  
COSATU, South Africa

The General Secretary  
NACTU, South Africa

The General Secretary  
FEDUSA, South Africa

The General Secretary  
CONSAWU, South Africa