



South Africa - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 10 November 2015

Information on xenophobic attacks.

A publication issued in March 2015 by *Freedom House* reviewing events of 2014 states:

“Increased immigration, particularly from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Somalia, has spurred xenophobic violence by police and vigilantes.” (Freedom House (16 March 2015) *Freedom in the World 2015 - South Africa*)

A document published in June 2015 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of the preceding year notes:

“Random xenophobic attacks on foreign African migrants and ethnic minorities occurred and sometimes resulted in death, injury, and displacement. Incidents of xenophobic violence were generally concentrated in areas characterized by poverty and lack of services. According to researchers from the African Center for Migration and Society, perpetrators of crimes against foreigners enjoyed relative impunity.” (United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - South Africa*)

A publication in April 2015 by *Amnesty International* notes that:

“South African authorities will need to do much more if impunity for xenophobic violence and other relating longstanding human rights violations are to be effectively combatted, Amnesty International-South Africa has said today. Widespread attacks against refugees, migrants and their businesses most recently in the Durban area have finally triggered some action from government officials. In the past two weeks, at least four people have been killed, many others seriously injured, shops looted and over 1,000 people displaced in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal province.” (Amnesty International (16 April 2015) *South Africa: Urgently take steps to combat impunity for xenophobic violence*)

This document also notes that:

“The violence against refugees is unusual in KwaZulu-Natal...” (ibid)

In June 2015 the *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project* states that:

“Conflict levels fell dramatically in May 2015 after South Africa suffered a wave of xenophobic and anti-foreigner violence in April. The scale of the violence surpassed the anti-foreigner riots that hit Soweto in January 2015 after an alleged robber was shot by a Somali shopkeeper, prompting South African residents to loot foreign-owned shops. The violence resulted in multiple fatalities and re-sulted in over 8,000 foreign-born residents inhabiting camps for these internally displaced...” (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (June 2015) *ACLED Conflict Trends Report No. 38 June 2015*, p.7)

This document also points out that:

“Only a single xenophobic incident took place in May 2015, representing a marked contrast to the preceding months.” (ibid, p.7)

Voice of America in November 2015 states:

“Witnesses in Durban, South Africa, say six people of Ethiopian origin have been killed in alleged xenophobic attacks over the past week.” (Voice of America (6 November 2015) *Six Ethiopians Killed in South Africa*)

This report also notes that:

“South Africa has experienced recurring bouts of attacks against foreigners in recent years. Poor South Africans blame the immigrants for taking jobs and contributing to crime.” (ibid)

In November 2015 *The Guardian* notes that:

“An outbreak of violence against foreign nationals in South Africa has highlighted the government’s failure to get to grips with xenophobia...” (The Guardian (9 November 2015) *South Africa: attacks on migrants show failure to stem racial tension*)

This document also states:

“South Africa is no stranger to sudden waves of violence against foreigners. Since 2008, an estimated 300 foreign nationals have been killed in xenophobic attacks, with thousands more displaced. The most recent national outbreak was in April this year.” (ibid)

References

Amnesty International (16 April 2015) *South Africa: Urgently take steps to combat impunity for xenophobic violence*
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/04/south-africa-urgently-take-steps-to-combat-impunity-for-xenophobic-violence/>
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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International

BBC News

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Google

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

International Crisis Group

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Minority Rights Group International

Online Newspapers

Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

Reliefweb

Regional Surveys of the World

Reuters

United Kingdom Home Office

United States Department of State

UNHCR Refworld