



Malawi – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 20 October 2016

Does the Malawian government send buses to South Africa to collect its citizens in order to protect them from attacks in South Africa or for any other reason?

A report from the Xinhua General News Service states:

“Malawi government is mobilizing resources to repatriate about 400 Malawians who are stranded in Durban, South Africa, following xenophobic attacks, government spokesperson, Kondwani Nankhumwa has told the local media on Monday. Nankhumwa said some of the Malawians were injured and that many of them had lost everything. ‘The figure has been rising because the situation is really tense,’ said the Malawi Government spokesperson. ‘As of Sunday morning about 360 Malawians were stranded and they have lost everything they had, including their travel documents.’ He said Malawi embassy in South Africa was in touch with the South African government to facilitate processing of temporary travel documents for those who had lost their passports. The government spokesperson added that Malawi Foreign Affairs and International cooperation officials were on the ground to bring back the trapped Malawians by the end of the week.” (Xinhua General News Service (13 April 2015) *Malawi government to repatriate 400 stranded Malawians from South Africa*)

A Voice of America news report states:

“In South Africa, the resentment fueling this month’s anti-immigrant violence is spurring fearful foreign nationals to return to their neighboring countries. Roughly 400 Malawians boarded six buses and arrived this week in their homeland’s commercial capital, Blantyre, with eight more busloads expected in coming days.” (Voice of America (24 April 2015) *Immigrants Flee South African Violence*)

In a paragraph headed “Malawi begins repatriation” this report states:

“Meanwhile, the Malawi government this week began repatriating citizens after two were killed and 3,200 dislodged from their homes, Malawi Information Minister Kondwani Nankhumwa said. He added that many fled with just the clothes on their backs to enter safe camps in the two troubled South African cities. The Malawi government has set aside about \$450,000 for the repatriation, Nankhumwa said, noting more funding may be needed.” (ibid)

See also article from the online edition of UK newspaper The Mail which states:

“Meanwhile, in Malawi, Information Minister Kondwani Nankhumwa said six buses carrying 390 Malawians from Durban were sent to Malawi yesterday, while five more buses were expected to leave today. Those killed in the anti-immigrant unrest included two Malawians, according to Malawi's government.” (Mail Online (21 April 2015) *Fleeing for their lives: Hundreds of Zimbabweans return to their home country after escaping the bloody anti-immigrant violence across South Africa*)

A report from the German broadcaster Deutsche Welle states:

“Some 300 Malawians were expected to arrive home on Monday in buses specially hired to bring them to safety. DW's correspondent in Blantyre, George Mhango, said that around 1,000 Malawians are believed to have been caught up in the wave of xenophobic violence in South Africa. At least three Malawian nationals are known to have been seriously injured. They reported losing their travel documents and other possessions. Some Malawians are still in South Africa at camps in Durban and Johannesburg. Centers have been set up in Blantyre and Lilongwe to receive the Malawians who are returning home. The Social Welfare Center in Malangalanga, Lilongwe said the returnees would be screened by Malawian police, immigration and welfare officials before being allowed to proceed to other destinations in the country.” (Deutsche Welle (20 April 2015) *Intimidated immigrants flee South Africa*)

An article from Al Jazeera states:

“More than 600 Malawi citizens have left South Africa for their home country after refusing to reintegrate into the local communities, more than three weeks after xenophobic attacks broke out in the city of Durban. George Chilonga, deputy consul at Malawi's consulate general, told Al Jazeera that 33 buses from the three camps of Isipingo, Chatsworth, and Phoenix had departed for Blantyre, Malawi on Tuesday. ‘This is our third trip this week, and we still require an estimated 30 more buses to transport the remainder,’ Chilonga said.” (Al Jazeera (29 April 2015) *Hundreds of Malawians leave South Africa after attacks*)

An article from South African newspaper the Sowetan states:

“A Sowetan team is accompanying the group on their journey back home. According to humanitarian organisation Gift of the Givers, 22 of the 24 buses took more than 1500 displaced Malawians from Durban and Pietermaritzburg while another two buses travelled from Mayfair, Johannesburg, where some were temporarily housed. Malawians living in the Makause informal settlement in Primrose, near Germiston on the East Rand, were threatened and many fled to a shelter offered by Gift of the Givers. The departures are part of the repatriation programme co-ordinated by Gift of the Givers, the Department of Home Affairs and the Malawi government.” (Sowetan (April 30 2015) *malawians head back home*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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.

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