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South African unions step up action against xenophobia

Brussels, 23 April 2015 (ITUC OnLine): ITUC-affiliated trade union centres in South Africa COSATU, FEDUSA and NACTU have pledged to step up action against xenophobia following violent attacks against foreigners in the country which have cost seven lives. The union bodies joined a meeting of some 40 organisations convened by President Jacob Zuma yesterday to map out measures to tackle the immediate problem as well as the underlying causes of the violence.

The meeting recognised that there are genuine concerns raised by South Africans, which should be taken seriously, but that there is no justification for the attacks against foreigners. It was further agreed overwhelmingly that the attacks must stop and that all South Africans must be part of the solution.

While all of the participating organisations undertook to take action in their respective sectors and areas of responsibility, it was also agreed to form a committee comprising of representatives of all stakeholders who will work with the Inter-Ministerial Committee announced by the President to take the discussions of the meeting forward.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said, "Stopping xenophobia and discrimination, and tackling the underlying economic and social causes, is central to the mission of trade unions everywhere. Trade unions everywhere stand in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in South Africa, and we fully support the engagement of COSATU, FEDUSA and NACTU in the process which is underway in South Africa."

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 328 national affiliates.

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