SOUTH AFRICAN YMCA

DECLARATION ON THE XENOPHOBIC AND FEMICIDE ENGULFING SOUTH AFRICA

6 September 2019

The South African community is reeling from shock and is appalled at the brutal xenophobic and femicide attacks that are being witnessed in the country. South Africa is bleeding due to the multifaceted nature of the challenges that that threaten the social and moral essence of our democracy and our communities. There is the dual war against our mothers, sisters and daughters; and against foreign nationals, our brothers and sisters from across our continent. We are profoundly angered, embarrassed and remorseful about ~~at~~ what is happening. We identify in solidarity, love and compassion with each victim, their families and communities.

The SA YMCA associates with many other declarations of outrage and calls to action, of the churches and other faith-based and youth organisations across civil society. We do so specifically out of our Christian commitment and YMCA mission to empower young people for life, leadership and service.

At the core, femicide and xenophobic attacks are a violation of, and an assault on our most basic human rights to safety, dignity and life itself. Therefore, the SA YMCA does and will specifically advocate for and commit itself to the following :

* That femicide be seen as a crime affecting all citizens, not only women, and that it be proclaimed a crime against society.
* That xenophobia is a crime affecting all South Africans, not only foreign nationals and be declared a crime against society.
* Calling on government to urgently review our legal framework to ensure safety and justice for all who call South Africa home.

We further specifically commit ourselves as the SA YMCA to :

* Urgently strengthen our work and programs related to transformative masculinity, the empowerment of women and the fighting of all and any abuse against women, children and any minority or vulnerable groups.
* Strategically review all our programing and budgeting to prioritise the current issues at hand. We will specifically review our Youth Justice program to strategically sharpen its focus and align it to the dual scourges of femicide and xenophobia.
* Continue to provide effective safe, power-spaces for women and youth in our communities - with renewed vigour.
* Actively and decisively call on and collaborate with other youth structures and organisations - to form a United Front of Action - to rid our society and communities of these scourges.

The SA YMCA will urgently engage with its Africa and World YMCA structures to invite their solidarity and collaborative experience oppose these evils in our afflicted and wounded society - as they did in solidarity with us in the 1970’s and 1980’s in standing against the apartheid regime, and its ultimate defeat.

We call on President Ramaphosa, and all elected leaders from across all political parties and leaders in all sectors of society - to provide decisive leadership on these critical issues - and to commit to a renewed moral, values-driven and ethical leadership. We particularly call on all fathers, brothers and sons across the beloved nation, to stand up, denounce and resist ~~all and~~ every form of violence - and stand in solidarity with our mothers, sisters and daughters, and our brothers and sisters from across the continent.

GOD BLESS AFRICA. GUARD HER WOMEN, YOUTH AND CHILDREN. RID HER OF ALL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE. GUIDE AND TRANSFOM HER LEADERS. AND BRING HER TO PEACE. LORD IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER.