



1 Newtown Avenue, Level L3, Soul City Offices, Johannesburg, 2193, South Africa  
Tel +27 11 339 1468 | [getinfo@iranti.org.za](mailto:getinfo@iranti.org.za) | [www.iranti.org.za](http://www.iranti.org.za)

## [STATEMENT] IRANTI CALLS ON SOUTH AFRICA TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST AFRO-PHOBIA AND GBV

1. South Africa is a nation with an intimate relationship with violence. Violence colours our social imaginary in ways that cross-cut gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race. The violence that we interact with either as perpetrators or victims is rooted in histories of apartheid and colonial subjugation in no small way.
2. Since 1994 South Africa has seen a growth in anti-immigrant sentiment that has racial and colourist undertones. The afro-phobic violence that erupted in 2008 was directed at Black immigrants of African origin and dark skin South Africans who because of their complexion do not fit the script. This peculiar aspect of the xenophobic violence highlights how ‘foreign’ within the purview of these attacks, is conceived as Black and African not white.
3. Xenophobic violence, whilst largely condemned by government and members of the South African public, resurfaces almost yearly. Over the past week, South African’s have targeted Africans immigrants who have sought refuge in the country. The country has also been rocked by the murder of young Black womxn, bringing heightened attention to the scourge of gender and sex-based violence in the country.
4. Irantí as a media-advocacy organisation, documents the experiences of LGBTI+ persons, who as a demographic, exist on the fringes of a heteronormative patriarchal society. As a civil society organisation, we are not only invested in training human rights defenders to champion the rights of LGBTI+ persons, we are dedicated to constructing a society free of violence, through the fostering of empathy, justice and tolerance.
5. LGBTI persons, human rights defenders, often flee their countries because of the approaches that their governments take to suppress the expressions of same sex sexual orientation as well as gender non-conforming identities and gender expression. These approaches include criminalisation, police detention and other punitive measures. Many Queer Africans seek refuge in South Africa. It is unfortunate that LGBTI immigrants who flee from repression in their home countries are not able to find solace in neighbouring countries and rather they experience multi-systemic violations based on race, sexual orientation and gender identity.
6. Consequently, we condemn the killing of African immigrants as well as womxn and children. We believe that the spates of afro-phobic violence, the looting of shops, intimidation of African immigrants and murder of Africans since 1994 as well as the escalating levels of gender-based



1 Newtown Avenue, Level L3, Soul City Offices, Johannesburg, 2193, South Africa  
Tel +27 11 339 1468 | [getinfo@iranti.org.za](mailto:getinfo@iranti.org.za) | [www.iranti.org.za](http://www.iranti.org.za)

violence, of which femicide is a prominent feature occur within a more profound context of systematic violence that must be addressed.

7. We urge government and members of the general public to take the plight of immigrants, queer, lesbian, bisexual, trans, gender diverse people and children seriously. As a matter of priority government must address the escalating levels of crime, poverty, unemployment and lack of educational opportunity that have caused civil unrest and made South Africa fertile ground for the anti-immigrant sentiment and afro-phobic violence.

8. We call on the President to review policing and legislative practices that fail to protect LGBTI persons, womxn and children, and to make sure that the rights to safety and dignity are rights afforded to all those who live and work in South Africa and not a select few.

9. We call on the government to implement a fully costed National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence. This plan should prioritise the lives of people pushed to the margins as a matter of urgency and national concern.

10. We maintain that gay and trans rights are not separate from other rights and believe that an integrated and collective struggle against injustice is a fundamental way to finding our common freedoms.

11. We call on LGBTI+ persons, womxn, and all concerned individuals to join the fight against Gender- Based Violence by joining the demonstration outside the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on 13 September at 3am.

12. We call on LGBTI+ persons, womxn, and all concerned individuals to join the fight against Afro-phobia by joining the demonstration through Johannesburg CBD starting in Pieter Roos Park on 14 September 2019 at 10:00

13. For people affected by the xenophobia, please contact Lawyers for Human Rights, Fruit Basket, Passop and Xenowatch.

For media enquiries:

Sihle Motsa | LBQ Specialist | [sihle@iranti.org.za](mailto:sihle@iranti.org.za) | 060 708 3009

Rumana Akoob | Communications Specialist | [rumana@iranti.org.za](mailto:rumana@iranti.org.za) | 078 036 6832