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PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

ALL EYES ON SOUTH AFRICA

Mthwakazi calls for international scrutiny of Afrophobic violence, displacement, detention and organised removal demands - and for sustained monitoring through 30 September

Statement by Mqondisi Moyo, President, Mthwakazi Republic Party

10 September 2026 | Ref: MRP-100926-01a

I speak today because our people from Mthwakazi, like many other Africans, are living inside a South African human-rights emergency. Many went south because Zimbabwe failed to provide them with security, work, dignity or a credible political future. They should not have to choose between repression at home and persecution abroad.

South Africa has the sovereign right to control its borders. It has the right to identify people who are unlawfully present, to apply immigration law, and to remove them through lawful procedures. What it does not have is the right to permit private movements to decide who may live, work, trade, receive medical care or remain in a community because they are African and foreign.

President Cyril Ramaphosa stated the governing rule himself on 7 June: immigration enforcement belongs to the state, and the state alone. He also said there is no place in South Africa for xenophobia or Afrophobia. That standard is correct. The question is whether the South African state is meeting it.[1]

The record now requires a prosecutorial answer, not another speech.

The state had notice

By 21 June, South Africa's own Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration said 89 public-order and incitement incidents had already been registered as criminal cases. The government expressly stated that violence, intimidation, denial of access to clinics, hospitals, schools and other public services, and Afrophobic conduct were unlawful. The danger was therefore not hidden. It was documented by the state itself.[2]

Yet documented refugees and asylum seekers in Durban spent weeks and then months outside Home Affairs because they said they could not safely return to the communities from which they had been displaced. In June, police told a group of documented

1 South African Government, President Cyril Ramaphosa, "Address on illegal migration and anti-foreigner protests," 7 June 2026. The President stated that South Africa would protect the human rights of all persons in the country, that immigration enforcement rests with the state alone, and that there is no place for xenophobia or Afrophobia. https://www.gov.za/news/speeches/president-cyril-ramaphosa-address-illegal-migration-and-anti-foreigner-protests-07

2 South African Government, Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration, media statement, 26 June 2026. The Committee said blocking access to clinics, hospitals, schools or other public services is prohibited; violence and intimidation against foreign nationals are unlawful; and 89 public-order/incitement incidents had been registered as criminal cases by 21 June. https://www.gov.za/news/media-statements/media-statement-inter-ministerial-committee-migration-26-jun-2026

refugees to leave the Home Affairs site because the police could not guarantee their safety during a March and March mobilisation. In July, refugees working in Durban salons were beaten with sticks after being told they should already have left the country.[3][4]

On 3 September, March and March supporters again descended on the Che Guevara Road encampment. GroundUp reported that protesters arrived with sticks and sjamboks; belongings were moved into the road; several people were injured; and four refugees were taken to hospital. The people at that camp had been verified as lawfully present.[5]

The immigration-law defence is collapsing

The most revealing development came after the violence. The South Africa First Forum, the legal arm of March and March, gave eThekwini Municipality fourteen days to remove the foreign nationals from Che Guevara Road and demanded that government arrange their repatriation. Its own letter acknowledged that those people might be in South Africa legally or illegally. It further demanded that 'genuine refugees' be placed in refugee camps.[6]

The municipality answered that the people had been verified and that none of them was in South Africa illegally. South Africa's own government had previously said that the country does not operate refugee camps and that legally present people at Che Guevara should be protected while reintegrating into their communities.[7]

That matters. An anti-illegal-immigration movement is now demanding the removal of people whom the municipality says are entirely lawful. The target has therefore moved beyond illegality. The target is increasingly foreignness itself.

Detention and due process also require investigation

3 GroundUp, “200 refugees, legally in SA, forced to join thousands camping outside Sherwood Hall,” 17 June 2026. GroundUp reported that documented refugees verified by Home Affairs were told by police to leave because their safety could not be guaranteed during a March and March event. https://groundup.org.za/article/refugees-legally-in-sa-forced-to-join-thousands-camping-outside-sherwood-hall/

4 GroundUp, “Six refugees beaten in xenophobic attack,” 16 July 2026. The report describes six refugees assaulted at workplaces in Durban, including victims who said attackers ignored their documentation. https://groundup.org.za/article/six-refugees-beaten-in-xenophobic-attack-in-durban/

5 GroundUp, “Several injured after March and March raids refugee camp,” 3 September 2026. The report states that the Che Guevara Road refugees had been verified as lawfully present, that protesters arrived with sticks and sjamboks, and that four refugees were taken to hospital. https://groundup.org.za/article/Several-injured-March-and-March-raids-refugee-camp/

6 Daily News / IOL, “‘Repatriate them or else’: March and March flexes legal muscles,” 7 September 2026. The South Africa First Forum demanded removal and repatriation of the Che Guevara Road group, acknowledged that those concerned might be legally or illegally present, and said “genuine refugees” should be taken to refugee camps. https://iol.co.za/dailynews/news/2026-09-07-repatriate-them-or-else-march-and-march-flexes-legal-muscles/

7 South African Government, Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration, 14 June 2026; Daily News / IOL, 7 September 2026. Government stated that South Africa does not operate refugee camps and advised legally present people at Che Guevara to reintegrate with police protection; the eThekwini mayoral spokesperson later said verification found none of the current Che Guevara Road group to be in South Africa illegally. https://www.gov.za/news/media-statements/inter-ministerial-committee-migration-media-briefing-14-jun-2026 ; https://iol.co.za/dailynews/news/2026-09-07-repatriate-them-or-else-march-and-march-flexes-legal-muscles/

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The prosecutorial record is not limited to street movements. In the Western Cape, GroundUp reported that at least 100 immigrants were being held in police cells across five towns, some for weeks or months. Lawyers alleged that some detainees had valid documents, some had paid fines and remained in custody, and at least eight were being detained unlawfully. SAPS disputes allegations of indiscriminate or unlawful treatment. Those competing claims require case-by-case judicial scrutiny, not dismissal.[8]

The international record has already moved beyond local controversy

In August, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination took the extraordinary step of adopting a formal Early Warning and Urgent Action decision concerning South Africa and the reported wave of xenophobia, racial discrimination, racist hate speech and hate crimes against migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and people perceived as such. This is not social-media outrage. It is treaty-body action.[9]

Ghana has now reported that 1,964 of its nationals were evacuated from South Africa between 27 May and 4 September. Ghana's Foreign Minister identified four Ghanaian deaths connected with the latest wave of attacks and related circumstances and said his government had pursued investigations and prosecutions through South African authorities. Ghana also petitioned the African Union Commission, which, according to the Ghanaian government, has indicated that the matter is expected to be tabled for deliberation at the January 2027 AU Summit.[10]

Nigeria has separately placed recurring xenophobic and Afrophobic attacks before the African Union and requested collective action, while expressly recognising South Africa's sovereign right to enforce immigration law. That is precisely the distinction Pretoria must now confront: sovereignty permits lawful immigration control. It does not

8 GroundUp, “Immigrants stuck in Cape jails since June,” 2 September 2026. GroundUp reported at least 100 immigrants held across five Western Cape towns, some for weeks or months; lawyers alleged that some held valid documentation or had paid fines and that at least eight detentions were unlawful. SAPS disputed allegations of indiscriminate arrests and unlawful treatment. https://groundup.org.za/article/union-and-activists-demand-justice-for-immigrants-detained-in-cape-winelands/

9 United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Decision CERD/C/ZAF/DEC/1, “Xenophobia, racial discrimination and hate crimes against migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and those perceived as such in South Africa,” adopted under the Early Warning and Urgent Action procedure during the 118th session; UN Office at Geneva session summary, 25 August 2026. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=6 ; https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2026/08/committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-closes-one-hundred

10 Ghana News Agency, “Four Ghanaians die in South Africa xenophobic violence – Ablakwa,” 7 September 2026; Ghana Information Services Department, “Government Spends GH¢49.72m to Evacuate 1,964 Ghanaians from South Africa,” 8 September 2026. Ghana’s Foreign Minister identified four deaths connected with the latest wave of attacks and related circumstances, reported 1,964 evacuations, and said the AU Commission had responded to Ghana’s petition and indicated that the issue would be tabled for deliberation at the January 2027 AU Summit. https://gna.org.gh/2026/09/four-ghanaians-die-in-south-africa-xenophobic-violence-ablakwa/ ; https://www.isd.gov.gh/government-spends-gh%C2%A249-72m-to-evacuate-1964-ghanaians-from-south-africa/

immunise violence, discrimination, vigilantism or failures of protection from continental scrutiny.[11]

30 September is now a measurable protection test

The warning is no longer abstract. On 9 September, Nigeria's Acting High Commissioner in Pretoria said that 1,699 Nigerians had already been evacuated from South Africa during 2026 and that the mission was preparing another round because March and March continues to demand that foreigners leave by 30 September.[12]

South African police have themselves acknowledged the planned mobilisation. SAPS says it is monitoring the 30 September demonstrations and will police them through normal public-order arrangements. This is not a South African government deportation deadline. It is an ultimatum imposed by an anti-migrant movement. That distinction makes the state's duty clearer, not weaker.[13]

South Africa therefore cannot say that it was not warned. The question is now prospective and measurable: will the state prevent intimidation, assault, forced displacement and unlawful private immigration enforcement before 30 September, or will it once again explain the consequences afterwards?

SADC's preventive machinery now has a named chair

On 8 September, the SADC Secretariat began its briefing mission to Eswatini after the Kingdom assumed the chairship of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. SADC identifies the Organ's functions as including preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution, mediation, political stability, democracy and good governance. Foreign Minister Senator Pholile Shakantu chairs the Organ's ministerial committee.[14]

Eswatini has also begun a government-wide induction for its Organ responsibilities, bringing together institutions responsible for foreign affairs, defence, state security, policing, immigration, refugees and

11 Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation of Nigeria, “President Tinubu Takes Fight Against Xenophobic, Afrophobic Attacks In S’Africa To AU,” 30/31 August 2026. Nigeria requested collective AU attention and placement of the matter on the January 2027 Assembly agenda while expressly recognising South Africa’s sovereign right to enforce immigration law. https://fmino.gov.ng/president-tinubu-takes-fight-against-xenophobic-afrophobic-attacks-in-safrica-to-au/

12 African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, especially arts. 2–7, 12, 13, 15 and 16. Article 12 provides that a legally admitted non-national may be expelled only by a decision taken in accordance with law and prohibits mass expulsion aimed at national, racial, ethnic or religious groups. https://achpr.au.int/en/charter/african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights

13 South African Government / GCIS, Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration, 8 September 2026. The Government stated that the 46th SADC Summit endorsed South Africa’s proposal for a multi-sectoral regional dialogue on migration to be convened by 31 December 2026. https://www.gcis.gov.za/statement-of-the-inter-ministerial-committee-on-progress-made-in-implementing-the-five-point-plan-on . See nn. 10–11 above for Ghanaian and Nigerian AU action.

14 Voice of Nigeria, “Envoy Seeks More Support to Evacuate Nigerians from SA,” 9 September 2026. Acting Nigerian High Commissioner Temitope Ajayi said 1,699 Nigerians had already been evacuated from South Africa in 2026 and that another round was being prepared because March and March had fixed 30 September as a deadline for foreigners to leave. https://von.gov.ng/envoy-seeks-more-support-to-evacuate-nigerians-from-sa/

other peace-and-security functions. The machinery that SADC says exists to prevent political and security crises is therefore not theoretical. It is being organised now.[15]

I ask Eswatini, as Chair of the Organ, Minister Shakantu, the Organ Troika and the SADC Secretariat to treat the persecution, displacement and threatened removal of Africans in South Africa as a present regional protection question. Preventive diplomacy has meaning only if institutions are prepared to act before another deadline becomes another scene of violence.

The case we place against South Africa

1. **Failure of protection.** South African authorities have had repeated notice of organised Afrophobic intimidation and violence. Where people remain displaced for months, are attacked after seeking state protection, or are told the police cannot guarantee their safety, the state must account for whether it discharged its duty to protect persons within its jurisdiction.
2. **Private immigration enforcement.** The President says immigration enforcement belongs exclusively to the state. Yet private movements have repeatedly confronted people, demanded documents, pressured businesses and workers, and attempted to determine who may remain. A constitutional government cannot announce a monopoly on lawful enforcement and then tolerate a parallel street system of coercion.
3. **Targeting of lawful refugees and asylum seekers.** The Che Guevara record is particularly serious because the removal demand now extends to people whom the municipality says are legally present. That is evidence that the dispute cannot honestly be reduced to undocumented migration.
4. **Potentially arbitrary or unlawful detention.** Allegations that documented migrants or people who had already satisfied court-imposed fines remained detained for weeks require independent investigation, access to counsel, judicial review and transparent publication of the legal basis for continued custody.
5. **Interference with work, services and ordinary life.** The record includes attacks at workplaces, pressure on employers, intimidation of traders and allegations of interference with access to healthcare. These are not abstract migration-policy disagreements. They concern whether African foreigners can safely live ordinary lawful lives.
6. **Forced displacement and organised removal demands.** People have fled homes, jobs and communities because they fear attack. Organised movements are now asking government to remove even lawful refugees. That combination must be

15 Eyewitness News, “No extra police funding for planned anti-migrant protests following September 30 ultimatum,” 8 September 2026. SAPS Deputy National Police Commissioner Tebello Mosikili said police would continue to monitor and police the announced demonstrations through normal policing arrangements. https://www.ewn.co.za/2026/09/08/no-extra-police-funding-for-planned-anti-migrant-protests-following-september-30-ultimatum

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monitored for evidence of coercive population removal, denial of return, property loss, or official acquiescence.

The law already supplies the questions

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights guarantees non-discrimination, equal protection, life and personal integrity, dignity, liberty and security, a fair hearing, movement and residence, asylum, lawful individual expulsion, protection against mass expulsion, access to services, work and health. South Africa does not need a new vocabulary. It needs to demonstrate compliance with obligations it has already accepted.[16]

I do not today make the technical legal allegation that the South African state is committing ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity. Those charges require evidence of elements that must be proved, not assumed. But the warning signs are now serious enough that nobody should be permitted to say later that the world did not know.

An organised movement is demanding removal of lawfully present foreigners. Documented refugees have been displaced for months. Refugees have been assaulted after returning to work. African governments are evacuating citizens and recording deaths. A United Nations treaty body has invoked its Early Warning and Urgent Action procedure. These are facts that demand investigation now, before stronger legal terminology becomes appropriate because the conduct has become worse.

What we ask of the international community

I ask the African Union, SADC, the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation under Eswatini's chairship, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the United Nations, UNHCR, African governments, diplomatic missions, journalists and human-rights organisations to keep all eyes on South Africa through 30 September and beyond. Observation is not interference. It is protection, evidence preservation and prevention.

1. **Preserve evidence.** Record attacks, threats, displacement, detention, deaths, property losses, employment pressure, denial of services, police responses, prosecutions and the treatment of people who attempt to return to their homes and workplaces.
2. **Demand transparent investigations.** Every death, assault, alleged unlawful detention and organised intimidation campaign should have an identifiable case

16 Southern African Development Community, “SADC Secretariat Organ Director Pays Courtesy Call on Eswatini Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,” 8 September 2026. SADC confirmed that Eswatini assumed the chairship of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation on 17 August 2026; Senator Pholile Shakantu chairs the Organ’s ministerial committee; and the Organ’s functions include preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution, mediation, political stability, democracy and good governance. https://sadc.int/latest-news/sadc-secretariat-organ-director-pays-courtesy-call-eswatini-minister-foreign-affairs

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number, investigating authority, prosecutorial disposition and public outcome where law permits.

3. **Protect lawful residents and refugees.** South Africa must ensure that documented refugees, asylum seekers and other lawful residents can reintegrate safely rather than being forced to choose between permanent encampment, detention-like relocation or departure from the country.
4. **Examine the role of organised movements.** Authorities should investigate whether any organisation is coordinating unlawful removals, intimidation, employment exclusion, interference with services or attacks on persons because of nationality or perceived foreign origin.
5. **Scrutinise the state response.** International institutions should examine not only what vigilantes do, but what police, Home Affairs, municipalities, prosecutors and political leaders knew, when they knew it, what they did, and whether official action protected victims or merely managed the consequences after displacement had already occurred.
6. Activate regional preventive machinery. Nigeria has called for AU action; Ghana says the AU has responded to its petition; SADC has endorsed a regional dialogue on migration; and Eswatini now chairs the SADC Organ whose stated functions include preventive diplomacy, mediation and conflict prevention. We ask the Organ Chair, the Organ Troika and the SADC Secretariat to identify what preventive mechanism will monitor the period through 30 September, receive evidence from affected communities and governments, and act before further violence occurs.[17]

7. Treat 30 September as an international protection checkpoint. African governments, diplomatic missions, UNHCR, human-rights monitors and journalists should document threats, deployments, arrests, injuries, removals, returns, police interventions and any interference with lawful residents before, during and after the announced mobilisation. If the date passes peacefully because authorities prevent abuse, that should be recorded. If violence occurs after this notice, the world should record who had warning and what was done with it.

Mthwakazi will not be silent

Our people know what it means when a government treats the suffering of a minority or a disfavoured population as somebody else's problem. We know what it means when warning signs are downgraded into administrative language until the graves make denial impossible.

17 Times of Eswatini, "Minister Pholile meets SADC Secretariat," 9 September 2026. The report states that Eswatini began a government-wide induction scheduled for 8–10 September for institutions linked to peace, security, governance and regional cooperation, including foreign affairs, defence, State security, policing, immigration and refugees. https://times.co.sz/43247/news/minister-pholile-meets-sadc-secretariat/

I will not compare different histories as though they are identical. I will say something simpler. The purpose of early warning is to act early.

South Africa once asked the world to look at injustice inside South Africa. It was right to do so. The same country cannot now insist that violence and discrimination against Africans within its borders are merely domestic matters of migration administration.

The standard South Africa demands abroad must survive contact with South Africa itself.

Keep all eyes on South Africa. Keep them there through 30 September. Preserve the evidence. Protect the people. Demand the prosecutions. Demand the reasons. Use the preventive machinery now, while prevention still means something.

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