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# **NOW HEAR THIS!** WITH **KENNETH MESHOE**

## **There are good, honest foreigners too ...**

**F**OR SOME TIME now, people have been talking about a recurrence of xenophobic attacks. Both locals and foreigners are talking about it, and foreigners are advised to either leave the country or face serious consequences.

Most foreign nationals who are in our country are not here by choice, but because of the unbearable political instability and economic hardships in their countries. Many have come from countries that are ravaged by war and have come here for safety.

Those who have chosen to make South Africa their home say they expected comrades who were in exile because of the political struggle to reciprocate the hospitality and generosity they received from African countries that welcomed them and gave them a place to stay.

Unfortunately those who were embraced by our brothers and sisters on the continent during the struggle against apartheid seem to have forgotten the love, care and support they received from fellow Africans.

I believe all those who escaped from the evil system of apartheid to neighbouring countries should be speaking the loudest in defence of those foreigners who are unfairly targeted by those blaming them for the crime in our country.

But sadly, many of them are quiet. Have they forgotten the risks that were taken by foreign governments to protect them from the apartheid security forces? Shouldn't South Africans who enjoyed African hospitality when they were in exile defend foreign nationals whose businesses and properties are destroyed or torched without reason?

*I'm just asking.*

Why are service delivery protests accompanied by xenophobic attacks? Why are foreigners blamed for all crimes in the country, and why are they denied the opportunities to make an honest living? Have we forgotten what "ubuntu" is?

While I admit that there are many foreigners in our country who are involved in criminal activities, so are many South

Africans. In every nation, you will find the good and honest people, but also crooks and criminals.

The apostle John shared with people of the world what he saw in heaven. He said, "After this, I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb."

What would our country be like today if no African country received South Africans who went into exile for political reasons?

Many of those who went into exile received formal education and military training. They were cared for, given jobs, supported and made to feel at home. Why don't we do the same for foreign nationals among us?

**W**HY DON'T WE do the same to foreigners among us? Why don't they reciprocate? Are there any South Africans who were accused of having "come to take the jobs of the locals"?

How many were attacked and killed just for being in a foreign land?

*I'm just asking.*

Can we ensure as good South Africans that the rumours and warnings of more xenophobic attacks do not happen? Can we commit ourselves to promote love, acceptance of foreigners and good neighbourliness in our communities?

Can we protect the innocent and those contributing to the growth of our economy through hardwork, while we expose and report those who break the law to the relevant authorities?  
*Yes we can!*

■ **The Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP is the president of the African Christian Democratic Party**