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**LAW SOCIETY CALLS FOR URGENT MEASURES TO DEAL WITH
XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) expresses its grave concern and condemns the ongoing violence and human rights abuses being perpetrated against foreign nationals, asylum seekers and others in the xenophobic attacks that have spread in various areas of the country over the past few days.

'Our Constitutional Court has confirmed that the rights contained in the Bill of Rights apply and extend to everyone, and are not limited to South African citizens only,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons Vincent Saldanha and CP Fourie.

They add: 'These rights include the right to life, dignity, equality, freedom from violence – whether from public or private sources – freedom of movement, not to be deprived arbitrarily of property, bodily and psychological integrity, access to health care, food, water and social security.' In addition there are the rights of women not to be abused as well as the rights of children to family care, basic nutrition and health care and to be protected from maltreatment and degradation.'

The LSSA calls on attorneys to participate in and assist with civic, community and policing forums to mediate between parties who have suffered losses and others who believe they have genuine grievances and concerns that may have led to the xenophobic attacks. 'Attorneys are equipped with the necessary skills to mediate between parties and to provide information on the rights and duties of citizens in a constitutional democracy,' say Mr Fourie and Mr Saldanha.

'The LSSA also stresses that perpetrators must be seen to be apprehended speedily and prosecuted to the full extent of the law,' say the Co-Chairpersons.

The LSSA adds its voice to calls for an urgent summit on xenophobia to deal with the current crisis and to establish the root causes of the attacks, so as to find immediate solutions as well as long-term policies to deal with and eradicate xenophobia and to educate all in South Africa as to the rights and duties of all people who live in our country. The LSSA commits itself to participating in such a summit and any initiatives that may arise from it.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE
LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

by Barbara Whittle

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Editor's note:

The Law Society of South Africa brings together its six constituent members – the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers – in representing South Africa's 18 200 attorneys and 4 700 candidate attorneys.

In Afrikaans items, please refer to the 'Prokureursorde van Suid-Afrika'.