



## Special Report: Xenophobic Attacks 2017

Prepared by Alexandra Hiropoulos  
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This special report provides an update on xenophobic incidents across South Africa over the course of 2017. With a focus on events occurring between 24 February and 06 March, this report provides updated information on the sequence of events that took place.

See the [Xenowatch special report for February](#) for more detailed information on events in Gauteng between 05 and 24 February this year, when community raids of foreign-owned or occupied residences and businesses led to the victimisation of well over 60 individuals, including foreign nationals and South African citizens.

### Olivenhoutbosch, Centurion, Gauteng

**Monday, 06 March, 2017**

**Hundreds** of Olivenhoutbosch township residents marched against poor service delivery, corruption and the high rate of crime in the area. **Residents demanded** the local councillor Cedric Tsela be recalled with immediate effect, alleging corrupt dealings.

Leaflets calling for “Mass Action” were allegedly distributed the night before calling on residents to stand up against crime and drugs being distributed by foreign nationals<sup>1</sup>.

Protesters **used stones and tyres** to blockade roads in the community. Police used **tear gas and rubber bullets** on residents to try to disperse the angry crowd. A number of residents jeered at the authorities, shouting out threatening chants. Officers fired rubber bullets in response to the confrontation.

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<sup>1</sup> Report verified by Xenowatch.



Protesters **marched** down the R55 to hand over a memorandum of demands to Gauteng chairperson Paul Mashatile.

**Residents went door-to-door**, demanding that foreign nationals with RDP houses provide proof of ownership. Multiple homes belonging to foreign nationals were damaged and windows were broken.

Residents sang and chanted in protest against foreign nationals, claiming foreigners obtained RDP houses illegally. Protesters moved through Extension 27 of the settlement and demanded to see dwellers' title deeds.

By noon, four shops were reportedly already looted. Most, if not all, shops in the township closed<sup>2</sup>. Multiple foreign-owned shops were looted, including a shop-owner from Somalia who **said** he had lost more than a quarter of a million rand worth of stock.

No information on arrests is available.

## Jeppestown, Johannesburg, Gauteng

Jeppestown, east of the Johannesburg city centre, has experienced multiple xenophobic incidents over the years, most notably **in 2008 and 2015** when residents attacked foreign nationals and looted their shops.

### Sunday, 26 February, 2017

**Attacks** on shops in Jeppestown owned by foreign nationals took place on Sunday night near the Denver Hostel where large groups of people moved around the area threatening foreign nationals and looting foreign-run shops.

“At around 9pm it was reported that a large group of men were doing the rounds in Jeppestown warning that Xeno attacks were imminent,” **said** the MEC for community safety in Gauteng Sizakele Nkosi-Malobane.

Around **100 people ransacked shops overnight**. Doors and windows were broken and items were strewn on the floor in stores believed to belong to immigrants in Jeppestown.

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<sup>2</sup> Report verified by Xenowatch.



After emerging from his store, where a number of his colleagues had barricaded themselves. a shop owner from Somalia **said**, "We've been stuck inside here until the police came. No one told us what they were looking for."

Police spokesperson, Brigadier Mathapelo Peters, **said** public order police and tactical response teams had been deployed and clashed with the looters, who attacked them with stones.

Most of the activity was near the Denver hostel where armed men reportedly gathered in groups. Other groups were reported to have been moving around Clarence Street, and near Commissioner Street in Jeppestown.

At least **one person was arrested**. The reason for arrest is unknown.

### **Monday, 27 February, 2017**

On Monday night, a group of residents of the George Goch men's hostel **attacked foreign-owned shops** and tried to barricade the M2 Highway.

In response, police used **stun grenades and rubber bullets** on crowds. Multiple arrests were made. The exact number of arrests and the reason for arrests are unknown.

A group of foreign nationals were **escorted out of Jeppestown** after they asked police to escort them to a safe place.

During Sunday and Monday's events in Jeppestown, 3 unconfirmed deaths of foreign nationals have been reported.

## **Cape Town, Western Cape**

Since January, 15 murders of foreign shopkeepers have been reported in Cape Town, including Khayelitsha, Makhaya and Philippi. Robberies appear to be targeting foreign nationals, especially Somali nationals.

Reports from January indicate tensions flared when a young girl was killed and two men wounded after a Somali shopkeeper allegedly fired a gun during the **robbery** of his business in Site C in Khayelitsha.

On Wednesday, 01 March, the Somali Association of South Africa said Somali shop owners are being deliberately targeted in Khayelitsha. The Somali Association's Western Cape director **said** at least 12 foreign shop owners have been killed in Khayelitsha and surrounding townships over



the past two months. “This issue has been going on for almost two months. It seems to me there is some organised crime in the area which is targeting only Somali shop owners.”

### **Monday, 27 February, 2017**

Most recently, a Somali shopkeeper was **shot dead** during a suspected robbery in Khayelitsha’s Site C on 27 February, bringing the number of murders reported to 15. According to police spokesperson FC van Wyk, at around 11 AM three armed suspects demanded money from the victim before they shot the man in the chest and took an undisclosed amount of cash, airtime and cigarettes.

The area’s ward councillor, Mlulami Mabhuti Velem, **said**, “I was shocked to hear of this (latest) incident...It is a very sad state of affairs in Site C right now because even the ambulances need to be escorted when entering here”.

On 07 February, the Somali Community Board of South Africa planned to meet with police to discuss a spate of killings. The board said **14 Somali nationals had been killed** since the start of the year. At least 12 of these murders occurred in the Khayelitsha area.

### **Thursday, 02 February, 2017**

**Three Somali shop owners were shot and killed** in separate incidents on the same night in in Khayelitsha’s Site C on 02 February.

The three were **killed** within minutes of each other. One was shot while closing his shop for the evening, and the other two while inside their shops. A fourth man survived an attempt on his life.

On 31 January, it was reported that **at least eight Somali shopkeepers** had been killed in just over a month in Cape Town. Six shopkeepers were murdered in Khayelitsha Site C, one in Makhaya and two in Philippi.

A representative of the Save Somali Community **said** Somali business owners were being targeted, despite other foreign nationals also operating their businesses in these areas. “Before all shops used to be targeted including those owned by locals, but now it’s only Somali shops that are being attacked.”

According to the Save Somali Community representative, they had also received many complaints of shopkeepers targeted in Gugulethu.

SAPS representative Andre Traut **said** crime statistics could not be released.



## Anti-Immigrant March in Pretoria CBD

Friday, 24 February, 2017

An anti-immigrant march organised by the “Mamelodi Concerned Residence” association took place on 24 February in Pretoria CBD. Reports of the scheduled march began emerging around 19 January across the country, spurring fear amongst non-South Africans<sup>3</sup>. The flyer distributed by the association in January included hate speech and incorrect information on the amount of foreign nationals in South Africa, as well as on the extent to which they are employed in the country. This section provides updated information on events that took place around this march on 24 February.

### Accounts of Events Involving Anti-Immigrant March on 24 February in/around Pretoria CBD:

- The “Mamelodi Concerned Residence” Association and others marched to the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) to submit a petition calling for foreigners to not be allowed to work in South Africa.
- This march was approved by the city of Tshwane. Members of the Mamelodi Concerned Residents marched from Mamelodi West to the DHA where they delivered their petition. The submitted petition gave the DHA 7 days to report back to them<sup>4</sup>.
- Following submission of the petition to the DHA, participants were collected outside by their transport while monitored by police. This event did not include violence<sup>5</sup>.
- Marching from Atteridgeville to Pretoria City Centre, South Africans and Somali nationals **clashed** in Marabastad, near Pretoria CBD. Police formed a barricade between the two groups and fired stun grenades and **rubber bullets** to separate the two groups.
- A **mob of about 1,000** angry Atteridgeville residents armed with sticks and iron bars ransacked a camp near the Tshwane Events Centre. The camp was used by foreigners and others attending a church function. **Protesters may have included** residents from Mamelodi, Atteridgeville and Soshanguve.
- Multiple foreign nationals were attacked and multiple foreign-run shops were looted in and around Pretoria CBD.

<sup>3</sup> Organisers of the anti-immigrant march also attended the march by Rosettenville residents to the Moffat View police station on 5 February.

<sup>4</sup> Witness report verified by Xenowatch.

<sup>5</sup> Witness report verified by Xenowatch.



- Police had **arrested 136 individuals** linked to these events. Official figures on the nature of these arrests have not been provided.

For more information on Xenowatch or this brief, visit [Xenowatch.org](http://Xenowatch.org) or contact [xenowatch@migration.org.za](mailto:xenowatch@migration.org.za).

For media requests, please contact Kuda Vanyoro:

**Email:** [kvanyoro@gmail.com](mailto:kvanyoro@gmail.com)

**Telephone:** +27 (0)11 717 4674

**Fax :** +27 (0)86 553 3328

*The African Centre for Migration & Society*

*University of the Witwatersrand*

*PO Box 76, Wits 2050, South Africa*

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**Xenowatch** based at the African Centre for Migration & Society at the University of the Witwatersrand  
P.O. Box 76, Wits 2050, South Africa | : +27 11 717 4033 | F: +27 11 717 4040 | [xenowatch@migration.org.za](mailto:xenowatch@migration.org.za) | [www.xenowatch.org](http://www.xenowatch.org)

Reports of past, current or potential xenophobic incidents can be sent through these methods:  
FREE SMS to 44161 | E-MAIL to [xenoreport@migration.org.za](mailto:xenoreport@migration.org.za) | Online at [xenowatch.org/report](http://xenowatch.org/report)  
All reports should include the location, time and description of the incident.

