



Beyond Borders: An overview of xenophobia in South Africa

Release date: 31 October 2023

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Findings summary	2
2.1. Overall findings	2
2.2. Specific findings	2
3. Disinformation campaigns	3
4. South African context	4
5. Methodology	6
6. Key legislative frameworks	6
7. Rights violations	8
8. Characterisation of xenophobia online	13
9. Twitter/X social network analysis	17
10. Timeline of Major Events	24
11. Make Mzansi Great Again	24
12. Recommendations	26
13. Conclusion	26

1. Introduction

In recent years, South Africa has faced an escalating and deeply concerning issue: xenophobia. This phenomenon, characterised by a growing hostility towards non-nationals, has manifested itself in various forms, ranging from hate speech and discrimination to violent attacks. This report aims to provide a broad overview of the xenophobic landscape in South Africa by examining its complexities, manifestations, and possible underlying causes.

This report views the situation through a human rights-based lens from the vantage point of the rights of persons who are displaced from the country of their origin. Non-nationals are being scapegoated for socio-economic challenges that in many instances, including a range illustrated in this report, they have not given rise to.

This report explores the violation of rights, the role of online platforms in spreading xenophobic narratives, and the intricate relationship between political agendas and the rise of xenophobia in South Africa.

2. Findings summary

The "Beyond Borders: An overview of xenophobia in South Africa" report examines the escalating issue of xenophobia within the country. An overview of international human rights instruments and South Africa's domestic laws relevant to migrant rights is presented in this report. These frameworks establish protections for migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, emphasising states' obligations to uphold these rights. The report then delves into the complexities, manifestations, and potential underlying political causes, exploring whether the increase in xenophobic incidents since 2020 may be politically motivated, particularly in the lead-up to the 2024 elections. The report then proceeds to examine the influence of political leaders and parties on the xenophobic discourse.

2.1. Overall findings

- A coordinated push to amplify xenophobic content and narratives has engendered greater organic engagement, amplifying the narrative considerably.
- This has been mobilised for political gain.
- This in turn puts pressure on the ruling party to adopt similar xenophobic rhetoric and sentiment.
- The two dominant hashtags appear coordinated.
- The two dominant hashtags appear to be coordinating with each other.

2.2. Specific findings

Rights Violations:

- Based on established human rights frameworks and domestic laws, the report outlines potential rights violations related to xenophobia.
- Examples of hate speech, incitement to violence, and discriminatory actions targeting foreign nationals are provided.
- There are numerous instances of individuals being targeted based on nationality.
- There are examples in the report where it appears that migrant rights are being undermined.

Political drivers of the rising number of xenophobic incidents:

- Operation Dudula and Put South Africans First advocate for stronger border control and deportation, while aligning their stances with political parties.
- Scapegoating of non-nationals is occurring as an element of election campaigning tactics ahead of the 2024 elections.

- Some political leaders, like those from the Patriotic Alliance and ActionSA, use xenophobic narratives to gain support and votes.
- The ruling party - the ANC - appears to have been driven into a policy corner by other political parties, where scapegoating of foreign nationals is being positioned as an election tactic to gain votes. In this political environment, it may be that the ANC may seek to take the 'wind out of their sails' by following suit. Indeed, some members of the ANC have made xenophobic and/or anti-immigrant statements that align with this broader trend.

Xenophobic discourse online in South Africa:

- Social media platforms are being used to propagate prejudiced views against non-nationals.
- The report presents various instances of online xenophobic sentiment traced back to the groups Operation Dudula, Put South Africans First and Mzansi Voices.
- Xenophobic Nationalism is being spread through online campaigns that appeal to patriotism and which have parallels to the Make America Great Again (MAGA)/America First campaign in the United States.

Disinformation and Manipulation:

- This research report highlights multiple instances of disinformation about non-nationals in South Africa. The presence of disinformation online goes beyond the realm of isolated instances and can be considered part of disinformation campaigns, where false or misleading information is spread to manipulate public opinion.
- Accounts engaged in xenophobic conversations exhibit coordinated behaviours, and there are indications of manipulation over time.
- Based on social media network analyses, there appears to be manipulation of the conversation that is being done in a manner synonymous with influence operation campaigns.
- Given the extent of disinformation, amplification, the presence of anonymous influencer accounts and inauthentic activity within the #operationdudula and #putsouthafricanfirst campaigns, they can be regarded as disinformation campaigns.
- These coordinated disinformation campaigns have led to more organic growth of online xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiment.
- The lack of instant response mechanisms on social media platforms enables harmful content to spread rapidly.

3. Disinformation campaigns

Disinformation campaigns spread purposely distorted content motivated by a specific goal, frequently related to a political agenda. Disinformation refers to false or misleading information deliberately spread with the intention of deceiving or misleading people. It is often used as a tactic to manipulate public opinion, sow confusion, or advance a particular agenda. It differs from the spread of misinformation which is when incorrect information is spread unintentionally¹.

Bateman, Hickok, Courchesne, Thange and Shapiro (2021) conducted a systematic literature review² and observed that among the research studies that focused on the short-term effects of social media-based influence operations, there was a subset that found that "operations caused shifts in political beliefs and behavior, increased xenophobic or discriminatory sentiments, and increased scepticism and uncertainty around vaccines and medical information".

¹Ireton, C., & Posetti, J. (2018). Journalism, "Fake News" & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

² Bateman, Hickok, Courchesne, Thange and Shapiro (2021) Measuring the Effects of Influence Operations: Key Findings and Gaps From Empirical Research. [Measuring the Effects of Influence Operations: Key Findings and Gaps From Empirical Research - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

Previous research and articles published by the media have posited possible explanations for the growing incidents of xenophobia in South Africa. Some researchers and journalists have identified online disinformation campaigns as playing a role in the spread of xenophobic narratives in South Africa. [DFR Labs](#) and the [Centre for Analytics and Behavioural Change](#) are among the organisations that do this type of research (see Amabhungane [article](#) 'Who is behind South Africa's xenophobic nationalism', see CAB research reports [here](#)).

In the April 2023 Amabhungane analysis, the authors conclude that "[e]vidence gathered for amaBhungane suggests that if South Africa descends into xenophobic violence, it will be disproportionately due to the actions of a few political actors". The article identifies possible hypotheses. Given that some time has passed and additional events have played out, this report revisits questions put forward in the amaBhungane report to explore the landscape as we enter the last quarter of 2023.

4. South African context

When South Africa transitioned to democracy in 1994, the peaceful nature of the transition was regarded by the international community as a remarkable achievement. South Africa's Constitution garnered acclaim as a testament to the country's peaceful transition to democracy during the mid-1990s. Archbishop Desmond Tutu coined the idea of a rainbow nation. However, the upbeat excitement has long since subsided and the hopeful outlook that accompanied 'rainbowism' – which has been critiqued academically, with the critique having been popularised through the emerging student movements of the mid 2010s - appears almost naïve in hindsight. The national mood that was once one of hopeful expectation has given way to increasing frustration and despair. South Africa as a state transitioning from a colonial and Apartheid past to a democratic dispensation has an expectation gap³. The political promises have not materialised. Unemployment, poverty and inequality persist. While a variety of commentators reject the continued references to the colonial and Apartheid pasts as an excuse that the ruling ANC's leadership makes use of it to deflect from its involvement in grand corruption, this historical context is nonetheless a significant aspect of the landscape, and cannot not be ignored. Within the discourse in the body politic about the status quo in South Africa, it is frequently said that while 1994 marked a political transfer of power, an economic transition has not been fully realised. This view is expressed with different narrative slants. One of the more egregious narrative slants is the Bell Pottinger campaign that significantly amplified and popularised the notion of white monopoly capital which highlights that economic power remains in the hands of a small white minority. Bell Pottinger did so through an online influence operation. The egregious aspect is that it fomented existing racial tensions, exacerbating them as a deflection from what has been widely articulated as 'state capture'. Once the Bell Pottinger campaign was exposed, the continued need for genuine economic transformation has become lost in the noise.

In July 2022, the United Nations sounded the alarm about xenophobia in South Africa (see UN [story](#): South Africa 'on the precipice of explosive xenophobic violence', UN experts warn). [Human Rights Watch](#) sounded a similar [warning](#) when releasing a [report](#) in September 2020. Government released the [National Action Plan](#) to combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2019. While this plan appears well considered, the implementation realm does not translate into reality from the words contained in a plan. This requires matched actions by mandated state organisations working in partnership with social partners.

Given that the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit extension period ends on 31 December 2023, it is worth sounding the alarm once more, since a policy decision that involves non-nationals will be in the spotlight at a juncture that is in South Africa's pre-election period.

³ The expectation gap refers to the disparity between what is expected and what is actually delivered or achieved. J. Xu and Y. Zhan, "Public Service Provision: An Analytical Framework Based on the E-Government," *2011 International Conference on Management and Service Science*, Wuhan, China, 2011, pp. 1-3, doi: 10.1109/ICMSS.2011.5998852.

From 1994 to 1 August 2023, monitoring organisation, Xenowatch has recorded a total of 1 024 incidents, 125 306 displacements⁴, 5 131 shops looted and 659 deaths on their [dashboard](#). In 2008, the count of total incidents was 150 328 shops looted and 100 315 displacements occurred. After 2008, the greatest number of incidents and deaths per year that were the result of xenophobic violence, was recorded in 2022. In 2022, Xenowatch recorded a total of 109 incidents, 2 182 displacements, 117 shops looted and 38 deaths. This has risen in comparison to 2021, when Xenowatch recorded 79 incidents, 359 displacements, 130 shops looted and 30 deaths. In the past three years, the trend is on an upward trajectory as can be seen in Figure 1.

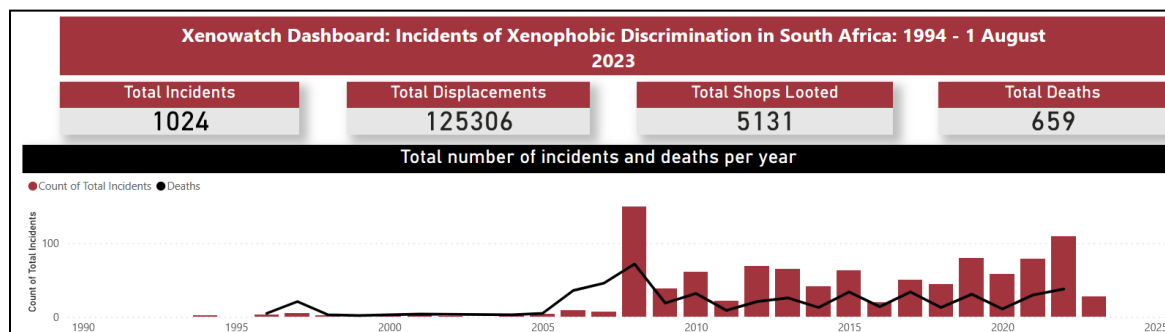


Figure 1: Xenowatch dashboard

While South Africa's [crime statistics](#) are available, they do not provide as much insight into the nature of xenophobic incidents and crimes committed by non-nationals compared to what is being bandied about in popular discourse. The Parliamentary [discussion](#) on Quarter 4 2022/23 crime statistics is useful to view in this regard. The absence of sufficiently granular official data that explicitly categorises crimes based on a person's national identity or citizenship within South Africa's borders has led to a situation in which mis- and disinformation is able to proliferate, particularly where African and Asian foreigners are concerned. Crime in South Africa remains underreported because citizens feel that the South African Police Services (SAPS) would not do anything about their case⁵. This means that although the crime statistics are reported in line with international standards, crime may in fact be worse than the official statistics indicate.

The institutional landscape is an aspect of the context which has a bearing on xenophobic incidents. SAPS does not appear to be fully equipped to deal with the extent of crime that is occurring in the country. This is evidenced by a Parliamentary Committee on Policing [media statement](#) about concerns about underperformance within detective services and a performance monitoring [report](#) presented to Parliament in which the Department of Performance Monitoring & Evaluation in the Presidency notes that enhancing visible policing is a key priority. SAPS' capacity has been weakened as a result of state capture. There have been a number of corruption scandals to emerge from SAPS. Many citizens are left frustrated and increasingly unsafe. This is reflected through traditional offline media and online where people frequently express their dissatisfaction with the minister of police, the minister of correctional services and with the South African Police Services in general.

The Department of Home Affairs is similarly beset with a number of internal challenges and presently has weakened capacity to discharge its mandated function at a pace which would alleviate some of the pressures that people are facing. These challenges include corruption that has affected the department's IT systems, which are widely known for being offline or very slow (see Parliamentary [meeting](#) on Home Affairs Annual Performance Plan). In 2022, six officials at Home Affairs were facing serious allegations of involvement in [fraudulent practices](#). The department of Home Affairs capacity continues to be strained and there is a severe backlog in processing official documents including permanent

⁴ Displacements refers to people of a particular nationality being displaced for example from an area they were residing due to violence in that area.

⁵ Lizette Lancaster (2017): Why are South Africans underreporting on crime?: Ample resources are available to police, but crime statistics paint a worrying picture. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/why-are-south-africans-underreporting-on-crime>

residence and asylum applications (see Performance [update](#) to Parliament). It was revealed through an answer to a Parliamentary [question](#) that the estimate given by the Minister of Home Affairs of 15 million undocumented persons in South Africa (this includes South Africans and non-nationals) may not be accurate. Statistics South Africa’s 2022 census puts the number of the population of persons born outside of South Africa who are living in South Africa (migrants) at 2.4 million which equates to a mere 3% of the population⁶. The countries with the top five largest number of nationals who live in South Africa are: Zimbabwe (1,012,059), Mozambique (416,564 people), Lesotho (227,770), Malawi (198,807) and UK (61,282).

5. Methodology

This research was undertaken using a mixed methods approach. Both qualitative and quantitative social network analysis was conducted. The qualitative analysis involved a content analysis of the conversation on Twitter/X associated with Put South Africa First and Operation Dudula. A quantitative analysis of the hashtags #putsouthaficansfirst and #operationdudula was done using a web application called InVid to determine the extent of engagement in the form of the number of tweets, retweets, likes and other metrics. Based on the findings of the qualitative analysis, a propagation timeline was generated.

The report also provides quantitative data from monitoring organisation Xenowatch, recording incidents, displacements, looted shops, and deaths related to xenophobia. It explores the political landscape for explanations and looks at the role that online campaigns may be playing in spreading political disinformation. Historical, social, geopolitical, economic and institutional contexts among others also play a role in shaping attitudes towards foreign nationals. This report does not attempt to examine all of those contexts in depth. Further research on these contexts is recommended.

The challenges in obtaining accurate statistics due to the long duration between censuses (10 years), underreporting of crime and police practices is a limitation for researchers and is noted as a limitation to this research. These statistical data limitations are also contributing to mis- and disinformation. This report does not seek to skirt around a recognition that there is a high crime rate in South Africa and that a small proportion of those crimes are being committed by non-nationals. Persons of any nationality may and do commit crimes.

It is also written with a recognition of the challenges that South Africans face on a daily basis, including the longstanding triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Socioeconomic and political circumstances are intensifying in a manner that is heavily affecting people. There are a range of difficulties that impact South Africans’ lived realities on a daily basis, such as struggles to access public services like potable water, health care and visible policing in response to crime. Multiple causal factors give rise to these challenges.

6. Key legislative frameworks

Various international human rights frameworks and conventions set out rights and protections that apply to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Table 1 provides an overview of the primary human rights instruments that protect these rights:

Right	International human rights frameworks and conventions
Right to Equality and Non-Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) - Article 2 and Article 7• International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) - Article 2 and Article 26• International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) - Article 2 and Article 2(2)

⁶ Statistics South Africa (2023): Census 2022 Statistical Release.
https://census.statssa.gov.za/assets/documents/2022/P03014_Census_2022_Statistical_Release.pdf

Right to Life and Security of Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR - Article 3 and Article 9 • ICCPR - Article 6 and Article 9 • Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) - Article 2
Right to Freedom from Torture and Inhumane Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR - Article 5 • ICCPR - Article 7 • CAT - Articles 1 and 16
Right to Freedom of Expression and Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR - Article 19 • ICCPR - Article 19
Right to Movement and Asylum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR - Article 13 • ICCPR - Article 12 • Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (link) - Articles 31 and 33
Right to Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR - Article 26 • ICESCR - Article 13
Right to Work and Fair Labour Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR - Article 23 • ICESCR - Article 6 • International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, such as Convention No. 97 on Migration for Employment.
Right to Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR - Article 25 • ICESCR - Article 11
Right to Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR - Article 25 • ICESCR - Article 12
Right to Political Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICCPR - Article 25

Table 1: International human rights frameworks and conventions

These human rights frameworks form the basis for protecting and promoting the rights of all individuals, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, or immigration status. States that have ratified these conventions are bound by their obligations to uphold and protect these rights for all people within their jurisdiction.

Regional human rights treaties and domestic laws in various countries provide additional protection for these rights. South Africa's Constitution is the apex law of South Africa. Table 2 indicates the key domestic laws that are relevant to migrant rights:

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 of the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, enshrines fundamental human rights that apply to everyone within South Africa's borders, including migrants and refugees. • Relevant rights include the right to equality, human dignity, life, freedom and security of the person, and access to courts.
The Refugees Act, 1998 (Act No. 130 of 1998)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This act provides the legal framework for the recognition and protection of refugees in South Africa. • It incorporates the principles of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, to which South Africa is a party. • The act defines who qualifies as a refugee, sets out the procedures for applying for refugee status, and outlines the rights and obligations of recognised refugees.
The Immigration Act, 2002 (Act No. 13 of 2002)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This act governs the entry, sojourn, and departure of non-citizens in South Africa, including migrants and asylum seekers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provides regulations and procedures for visas, work permits, and other immigration-related matters.
The Asylum Seekers Management Act, 2005 (Act No. 8 of 2005)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This act sets out procedures for the management and documentation of asylum seekers in South Africa while their refugee status applications are being processed.

Table 2: Key South African legislation

7. Rights violations

Based on the human rights frameworks and domestic laws outlined above, the section that follows outlines the kind of rights violations that could arise.

Right to Life and Security of Person:

- Violent attacks and hate crimes against foreign nationals, leading to loss of life and physical harm.
- Xenophobic violence that creates a climate of fear and insecurity within affected communities.

Right to Freedom from Torture and Inhumane Treatment:

- Torture or dehumanising treatment of foreign nationals by individuals or groups with xenophobic motives.
- Detention or abuse of migrants in detention facilities due to xenophobia.

Right to Freedom of Expression and Opinion:

- Spread of xenophobic propaganda, hate speech, and incitement to violence against foreign nationals, often facilitated through online platforms.

Right to Movement and Asylum:

- Obstacles or restrictions on the movement of refugees or asylum seekers fleeing persecution, resulting from xenophobic policies or sentiments.

Right to Equality and Non-Discrimination:

- Discrimination and unequal treatment of foreign nationals or immigrants based on their nationality or ethnicity.
- Denial of access to basic services, employment, education, and housing due to xenophobic attitudes.

Right to Education:

- Denial of access to education for children of foreign nationals due to their immigration status or xenophobic prejudices.

Right to Work and Fair Labour Practices:

- Exploitative or unfair treatment of foreign workers, including non-payment of wages and unsafe working conditions, driven by xenophobic attitudes.

Right to Housing:

- Forced evictions or denial of housing opportunities for foreign nationals due to their nationality or ethnicity.

Right to Health:

- Discrimination in accessing healthcare services, including denial of medical treatment based on xenophobic beliefs.

Figures 2 to 6 provide a selection of examples (among many) of instances where these rights were disregarded.

Hate speech

Background and ruling:

The content communicates words that are based on the prohibited grounds of hatred related to nationality. It encourages Uber users to first, actively stereotype, and second, discriminate against, people they assume to be Zimbabwean nationals, taking actions that may well cost them their livelihood.

Assets:

Lerato Pillay

@nyebe_official

Give a ONE STAR ⭐ RATING to every ZIMBABWEAN UBER/ BOLT Driver. Our People Have driving licences but UNEMPLOYED. #PutSouthAfricansFirst

#JoburgMayor Al Jama Mzwanele Manyi

18:15 · 05 May 23 · 799 Views

7 Retweets 24 Likes

Nandi

@BrownNandie · 4h

Replying to @nyebe_official

I love this 🍌

Figure 2: Hate speech towards Zimbabwean Uber and Bolt Drivers

Incitement to violence

Freeman Bhengu

@zibuseman · 15h

This is how you deal with illegal Foreigners. South Africa learn.

Al Jazeera English

@AJEn... · 23h

Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are being forced out of the Tunisian coastal city of Sfax where racial tensions have led to violence




Figure 3: Inciting violence in South Africa

Kommander Josh

@Kommander_Josh · Aug 5

Rest In Peace Zamazamas 🙏🙏🙏



Figure 4: Wishing harm on artisanal miners

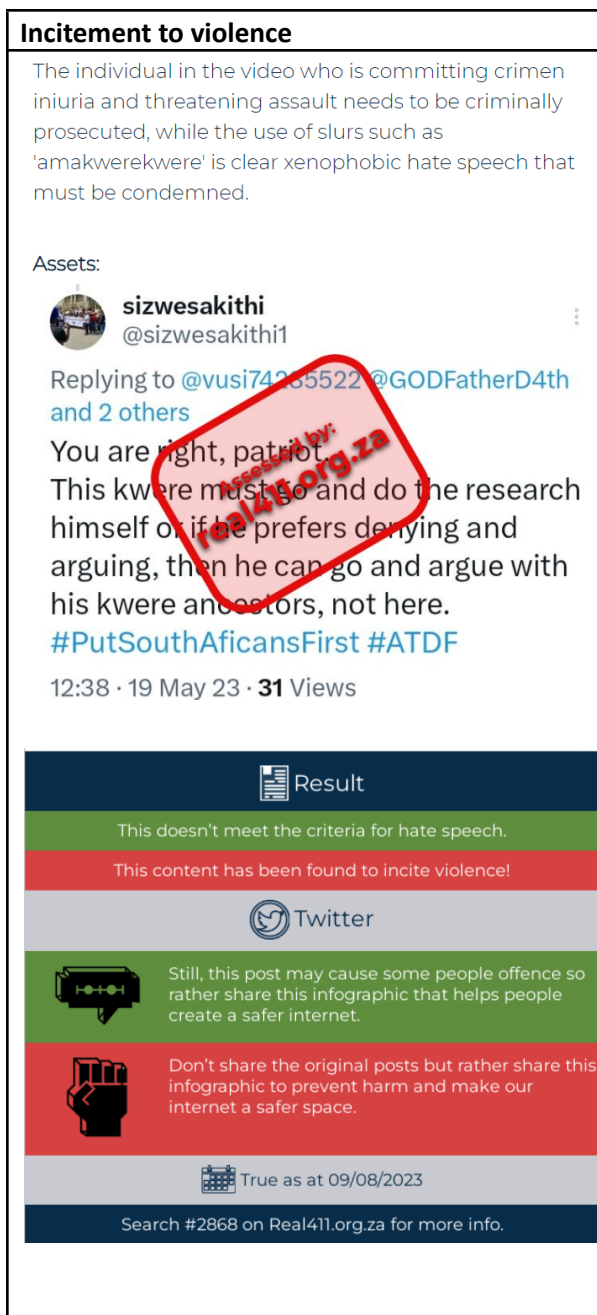


Figure 5: Content that incites violence



Figure 6: Encouraging illegal weapons


The following tweets entail an example first of trying to displace people from housing on the basis of nationality and second, trying to push foreigners out of jobs in South Africa:

- This [tweet](#) made on 31 May 2023 says “Operation Dudula aids Orangethief's community having housing issues with [@follow_transnet](#)”. The tweet contains a link to an Operation Dudula video in which its leaders are seen wearing uniforms that look like army uniforms and are engaging foreign nationals who are living in Transnet-owned houses and subsequently interacting with Transnet officials.

- This [tweet](#) dated 19 September 2020 says “Expose Companies that employ illegal immigrants. #PutSouthAfricansFirstNow #PutSouthAfricansFirst #23SeptemberCleanSA”. Replies list companies and some users even mention companies’ handles.

The examples in Figures 7 to 9 entail vigilante acts.

Vigilantism





PSAFLIVE @PSAFLIVE

WATCH: Illegal foreigners running for their lives as ordinary South Africans have started taking back their country, this comes after many attempts to talk to Ramaphosa to deal with the influx of illegal foreigners.

Bara Taxi Rank was also cleaned by @Combat_ship as the arrogant illegal foreigners refused to leave South African informal trading spaces.

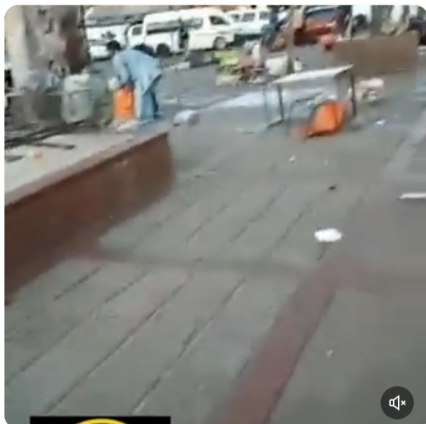
SERI/HSF have bigger problems now as they have no one to target and silence, their move to challenge South African Government while undermining SA Immigration Laws has forced South African citizens to start removing illegal foreigners.





PSAFLIVE @PSAFLIVE · 1d


WATCH: SA Concerned citizens removing illegal foreigners who are trading illegally at Bara. This comes after similar operations in Bree and MTN taxi ranks by #OperationDudula Dudula and Taxi drivers



91 350 962 90,9K

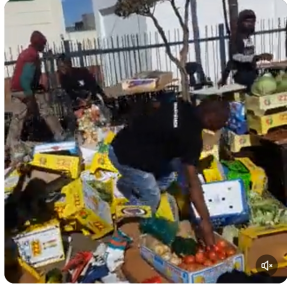
Figure 7: Tweets by PSAF Live about vigilanteism involving removing informal traders

Vigilantism



Freeman Bhengu @zibuseman · 10h

What we started goes on till next year, this morning at JABULANI MALL.




290 612 1157 197K

Freeman Bhengu @zibuseman · 10h


We are done with Jabulani Mall we are back at Baragwanath Taxi Rank.

28 53 283 28,5K



Freeman Bhengu @zibuseman

What we started goes on till next year, this morning at JABULANI MALL.



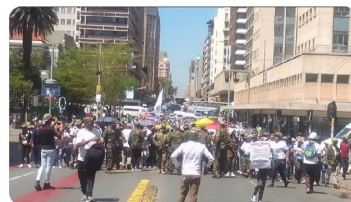
13:51 · 05 Jun 23 · 333K Views

655 Retweets 139 Quotes 1502 Likes

Zandile Dabula Retweeted

Mike on the mic @khulile... · 10 Mar

Let me make this clear, there's no court that can stop #OperationDudula and #PutSouthAfricansFirst evicting illegal foreigners from on SA building. Not even the media Daily Marverick can help them. We will not rest until illegal foreigners leave our country. Clear?



61 187 740 39,8K

Figure 8: Removing informal traders at Jabulani Mall

Figure 9: Disregard for judiciary and media

8. Characterisation of xenophobia online

Social media is one of the ways in which prejudiced views about non-nationals in South Africa are spreading. This section presents a qualitative analysis of the conversation through the lens of the Rights presented above.

The Bill of Rights contained in South Africa's Constitution provides in section 16(1) that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom to receive or impart information or ideas. However, the right to freedom of expression is limited – it does not mean that people are free to engage in hate speech and incitement to violence. In this regard, section 16(2), the Constitution says that the right in subsection (1) does not extend to (a) propaganda for war; (b) incitement of imminent violence; or (c) advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

While the Bill of Rights is clear, it is challenging to prevent xenophobia online. Some of the reasons have to do with the sheer volume of social media posts occurring globally that violate the various platforms' community standards, lack of international consensus over platform governance and domestic law in South Africa needing to catch up with the changing communications paradigm. There is limited case law to refer to as it is an emerging area. Conversation on social media platforms play out in real-time, while the mechanisms to prevent harm on the platforms are applied at a much slower pace. So even if the content is later retracted, it will potentially already have been seen by a large volume of social media users. In this context, many of those who are perpetuating xenophobic sentiments online have come to develop a sense of impunity about doing so.

Based on observing the online conversation, the main groupings that are promoting xenophobic views online are Operation Dudula and Put South Africans First. Accounts associated with these two formations produce content that contains hate speech, incitement to violence and trolling. The most prominent hashtags associated with their content are: #OperationDudula and #PutSouthAfricansFirst⁷. The content appears to be amplified through retweets and reposting it and forwarded on to encrypted platforms such as WhatsApp, where they circulate largely unregulated.

Those who make xenophobic pronouncements have become significantly bolder. Many of the influencers in the conversation started out as anonymously operated Twitter/X accounts. There has been a shift in which a number of the previously anonymous account holders are now known and that person also has their personal brand as opposed to being a well-known account operated by an unknown account holder.

One of the key accounts that was pushing xenophobic rhetoric a few years back is an invented character called 'uLerato Pillay'. The person behind the account was anonymous until they were unmasked as being Sifiso Gwala, a disgraced former lance corporal of the South African National Defence Force (see Daily Maverick [article](#), Timeslive [article](#) and Cape Talk [interview](#)). Subsequently, there have been accounts that use the uLerato Pillay image and persona in a cult-like manner.

It appears that a goal of the campaigns is to get authentic users to follow the influencer accounts associated with the campaigns potentially in order to influence their voting preferences. I.e. to grow the conversation into an organic one. There is a populist appeal and messaging that is disparaging of the parties for which those individuals would usually vote.

There are indications in the online conversation that it has been manipulated over a sustained period of time. While not all online conversations are manipulated – a portion of it is organic conversation by genuine accounts – a number of accounts have been found to be exhibiting strange behaviours. Examples of these behaviours include:

- accounts that only retweet; and
- multiple accounts that have been suspended for violation of community standards.

⁷ This hashtag contains the word 'Africans' without an 'r'.

There are indications that there is coordination that is occurring between accounts. For example, there are accounts that function as follow trains. See Figures 10 and 11 below. A current uLerato__Pillay account which explicitly says “ONLY FOLLOW TRAIN”.



Figure 10: uLerato__Pillay follow train



Figure 11: Birdfishing for followers

There have been multiple instances of disinformation surrounding foreign nationals. Disinformation can play a significant role in amplifying xenophobic attitudes and tensions. A disinformation campaign entails a deliberate and coordinated effort to spread false or misleading information with the intent to deceive or manipulate public opinion. When disinformation is deliberately retweeted for the purpose of amplification, social media users are at risk of believing the messaging that they are seeing - i.e. repeatedly - is a more prevalently held view than it actually is. When an ordinary user gets drawn into a follow train, they become part of an echo chamber⁸.

Africa Check plays a positive role in doing fact-checks and where the information that is shared does not represent facts, they assist the public by providing the correct information. Some examples are provided in Table 3.

Date published	Fact-check	Source
04 May 2023	Putting old claims to bed: no evidence undocumented immigrants 'contribute massively' to crime and 'nothing' to South Africa's economy	Link
10 October 2022	Thousands of migrants have jobs in Eskom, Vodacom and South Africa's government? No, viral message plain wrong	Link

⁸An echo-chamber is a community that is predominantly closed and polarised, wherein people with similar beliefs and opinions consume and share information in comparable ways: Bessi, A. (2016). Personality traits and echo chambers on facebook. Computers in Human Behavior, 65, 319–324. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.08.016>

09 May 2022	Are South African IDs 'no longer considered secure because of Nigerian smugglers'? We asked embassies	Link
01 March 2022	Foreign nationals' kids born in South Africa can be denied citizenship, but foreigners may work in government	Link
16 March 2021	South African MP wrongly claims 70% of informal economy 'in hands of non-citizens'	Link
07 December 2020	Almost 100% of restaurant workers in South Africa are foreign? Official data disproves finance minister Mboweni's claim	Link
19 November 2020	15 million 'undocumented foreigners' in South Africa? Herman Mashaba wrong again	Link
04 September 2019	Unproven that Hillbrow, nearby areas are '80% foreign national' as claimed in much-shared video	Link

Table 3: Fact-checks conducted by AfricaCheck

There are repeated instances of Twitter/X accounts that take any topical news story and blame it on foreign nationals. For example, after an accident near Pongola which was widely covered in the media, [this tweet](#) blames the accident on the truck driver and claims that the driver is a foreign national. The accident was particularly sad because a number of school children died. There is a noticeable tactic that is to blame crime related incidents on foreign nationals, often prior to any investigations. Particularly with crime stories that are topical, accounts that are known to post hateful content frequently repurpose the story to blame the crime on foreign nationals (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). This appears to be a deliberate tactic of scapegoating non-nationals for crime including crimes that South Africans have committed. Figures 12 to 14 are examples of scapegoating.

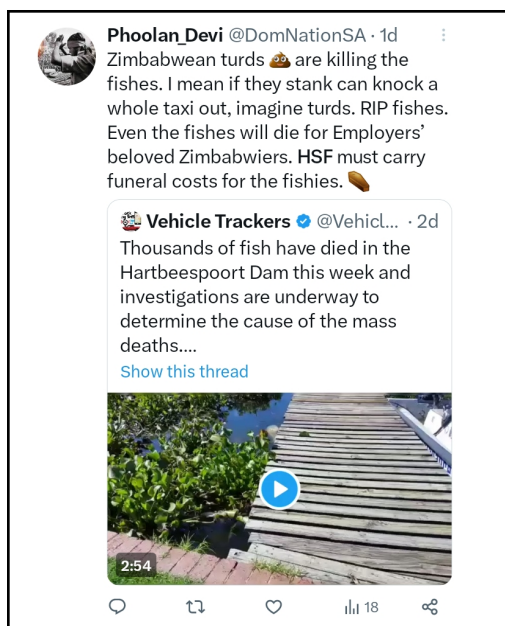


Figure 12: Scapegoating foreigners for dead fish in Hartebeespoort Dam



Figure 13: Scapegoating foreigners for crime



Figure 14: Claiming that the country is deteriorating due to illegal foreigners

Investigating officers require time in order to understand who the actual perpetrator of a crime may be and their nationality is not always known. What makes it particularly challenging is that in some instances, the reports may in fact have to do with actual crimes where the perpetrators are potentially foreign nationals. For example, [this tweet](#) contains reference to an arrest at a border crossing that relates to an attempt to smuggle explosives from a neighbouring country across the border into South Africa. Since police do not always discuss ongoing investigations and the information is not always readily available to the public and journalists, it is easy for disinformation to spread and for citizens to believe

speculation without delaying personal judgements by waiting to determine the actual facts. This is often reflected in the comments where accounts that appear to be real/unproblematic express their opinion on the events ahead of the release of any official information.

An additional dimension of the crime narrative related to foreign nationals is that police are part of the problem and that many police officers see foreign nationals as a source of income in the form of bribes that they solicit from them. In [this tweet](#), a video is posted with an allegation that police at the Beitbridge border crossing request a R150 bribe from Zimbabweans wanting to cross into South Africa illegally. The Real411 ruling on this tweet is that “there is no proof that SAPS employees have received bribes as this was not reported by any credible source”. Claims about police officers soliciting bribes from foreign nationals, particularly in Gauteng are made frequently and this should be probed further in evidence-based research initiatives.

Continuing to highlight features of the online conversation to do with crime, one of the characteristics of disinformation in the conversation is to distort statistics that relate to non-nationals. Figure 15 contains an example. This tweet has been retweeted 620 times and liked 995 times. A retweet count of 620 can be considered high. The average organic Twitter/X engagement rate (likes, comments and retweets) is 0.05%⁹. Most tweets get zero retweets.



Figure 15: Made up statistics on Twitter/X

Aside from made-up crime statistics, there have been other instances of the misuse or fabrication of other numbers. For example, [this tweet](#) about hospital statistics related to the intake of foreign nationals was assessed as fake information as the numbers are not official and there is no source of evidence that it can be linked to.

Over time, because there has been pushback against those propagating xenophobic narratives and they have been labelled as xenophobic due to it. The response - by many accounts labeled as xenophobic - has been to declare themselves "proudly xenophobic". Refer to Figure 16. The move here is to associate being xenophobic with patriotism or in better defined terms, ultranationalism. These are basically tactics to create insider and outsider groups, which are core to how social networks actually function (whether online or offline).

⁹ Statista (2023): Engagement rate per post. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1274144/engagement-rate-per-post-twitter/>

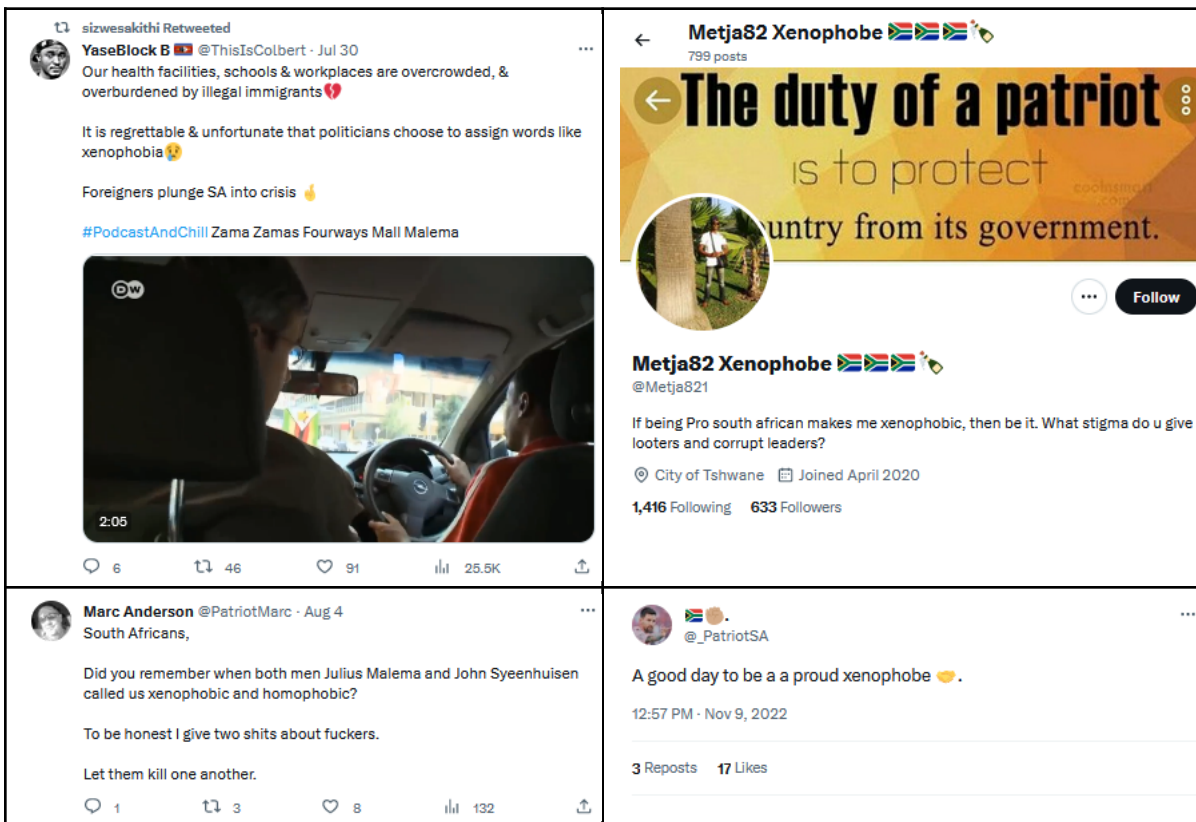


Figure 16: Responses to being labelled xenophobic

9. Twitter/X social network analysis

In this section, a social network analysis is presented. This analysis is of a quantitative nature and it was conducted using a web application, InVid, which was designed for the purpose of such analysis. The most prominent hashtags in the conversation were used as a basis for the analysis. It should be noted that not all of the tweets that are in the full conversation are being analysed – only those that contain the hashtags. The conversation is far larger in size than the number of tweets that have been analysed in this dataset represent. The approach of using hashtags is to analyse how these campaigns work and are performing.

#putsouthaficansfirst

The number of tweets with the #putsouthaficansfirst for the period 01 January 2020 to 12 August 2023 was 14 802. This hashtag does not contain an 'r' in Africans. The number of retweets was 104 933. This is an average of seven retweets per tweet. That is a high retweet average and suggests that this content is being amplified in a manner indicative of manipulation to give it more reach. The tweets received 318 433 likes. Refer to Figure 17.



Figure 17: Number of tweets containing #putsouthaficansfirst and the engagement numbers with these posts

In the propagation timeline for #putsouthaficansfirst in Figure 18 below, the orange line represents original tweets and the blue line represents retweets. There are noticeable peaks where the retweets significantly exceed the original number of tweets. The highest retweet peaks occurred in January 2022 and June/July 2022. In February, March and August 2022 there were slightly lower peaks that occurred. The dots represent individual users who are listed in the

legend. Note that this propagation timeline gives an indication of when the hashtag first started to be used, which is late in 2020, specifically on 12 November 2020. There has not been as significant an extent of retweeting in 2023 as there was in 2022.

The peaks are as follows:

- 24 January 2022: 9930 retweets of 1669 tweets
- 07 February 2022: 7400 retweets of 364 tweets
- 28 March 2022: 4747 retweets of 632 tweets
- 11 July 2022: 7466 retweets of 680 tweets
- 25 July 2022: 7660 retweets of 758 tweets
- 15 August 2022: 3659 retweets of 290 tweets

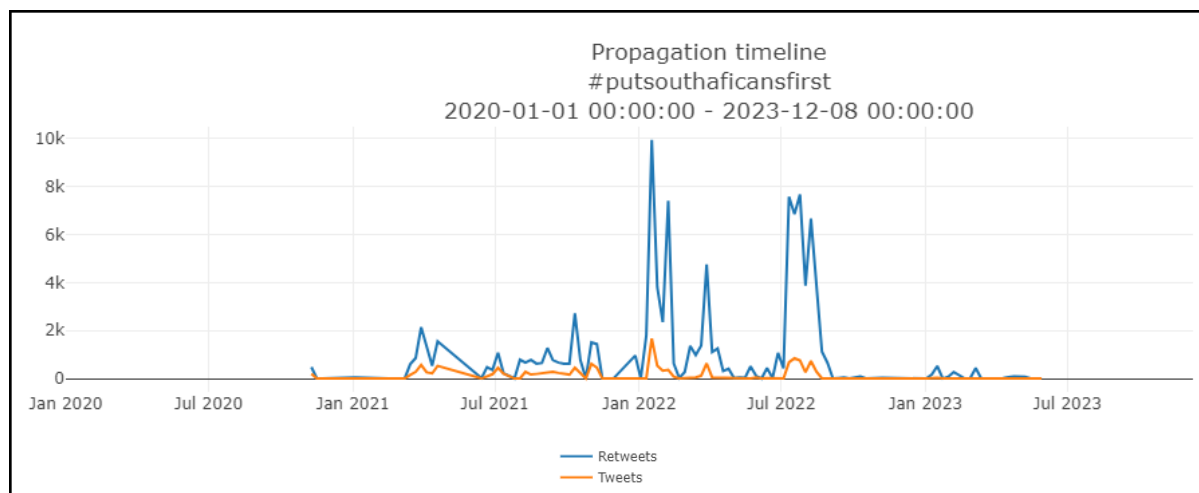


Figure 18: Propagation timeline of #putsouthaficansfirst

What stands out about the top most retweeted users is that they are a mix of anonymised accounts and political figures associated with the Patriotic Alliance (PA) and African Transformation Movement (ATM). See Figure 19.

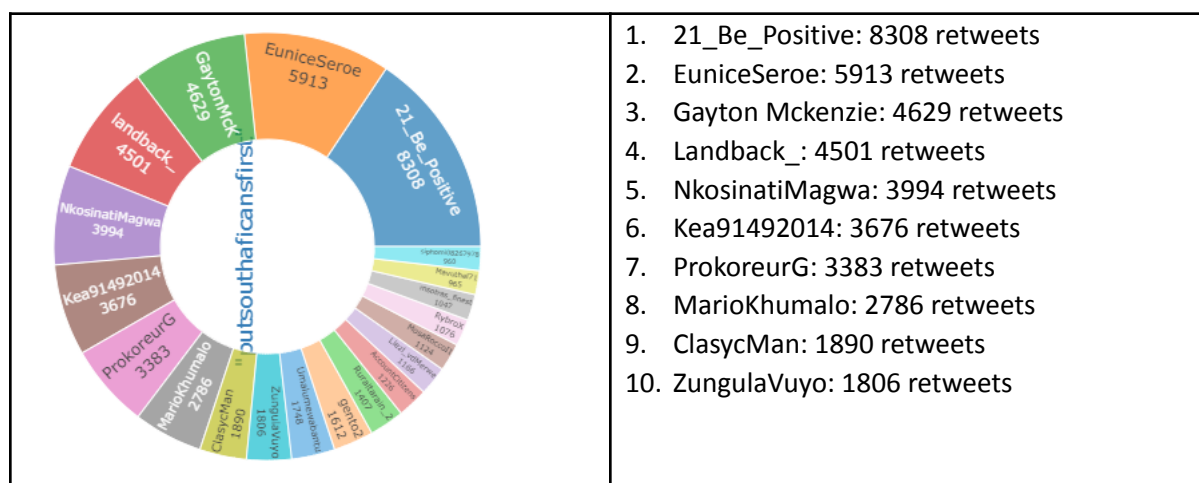


Figure 19: Most retweeted users using #putsouthaficansfirst

The list of users with tweets that include #putsouthaficansfirst with the most likes is fairly similar to the list of most retweeted users. See Figure 20. The extent of likes shows that the content is getting a reaction from Twitter/X users.

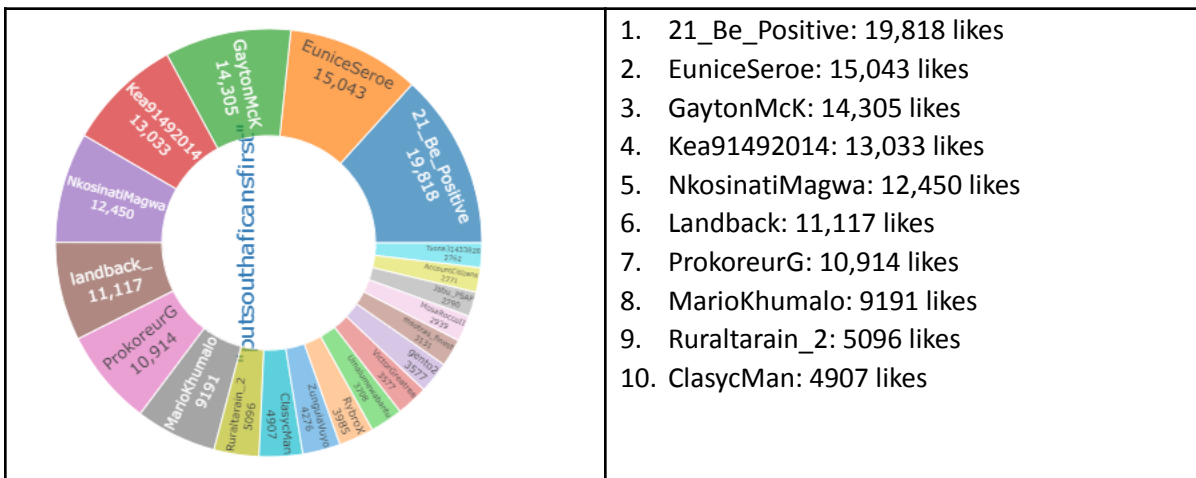


Figure 20: Users with most likes using #putsouthaficansfirst

The most active users have some similarities with the most retweeted and most liked lists above but what is interesting is that it does not have any political leaders in it (see Figure 21). This could mean that political leaders get more traction with a lower number of tweets, but anonymous users it appears are putting out the quantity. Some of them such as 21_Be_Positive, Landback_, Kea91492014 and ProkoreurG are also in the top 10 most retweeted. This means that they are tweeting a lot using the hashtag #putsouthaficansfirst and their content is being amplified through retweets.

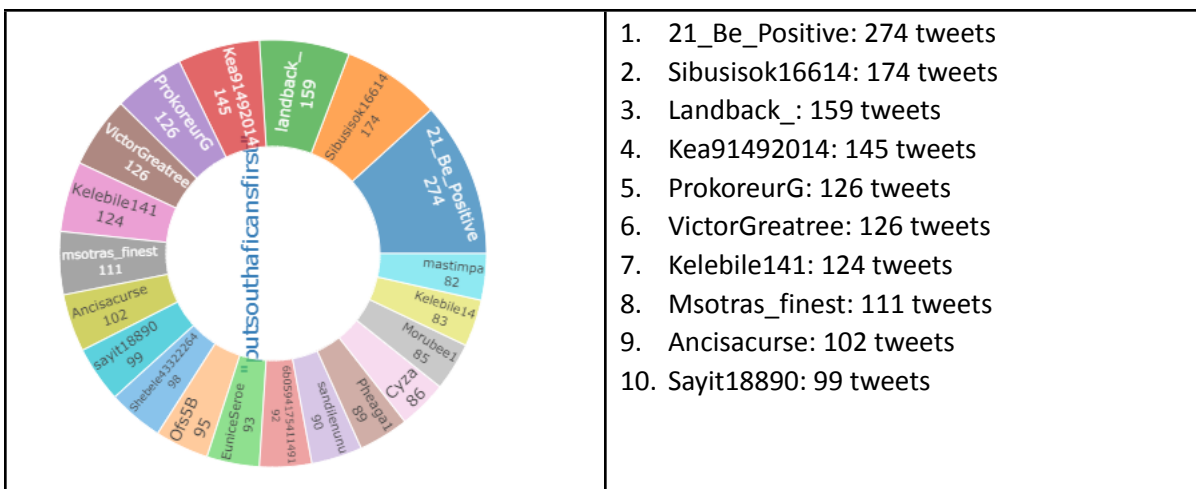


Figure 21: Most active users using #putsouthaficans first

What stands out about the most mentioned users (see Figure 22) is that they are mostly political parties, their leaders and relevant government department handles. This illustrates the extent to which the aim of campaigns that use these hashtags is to engage with political figures.

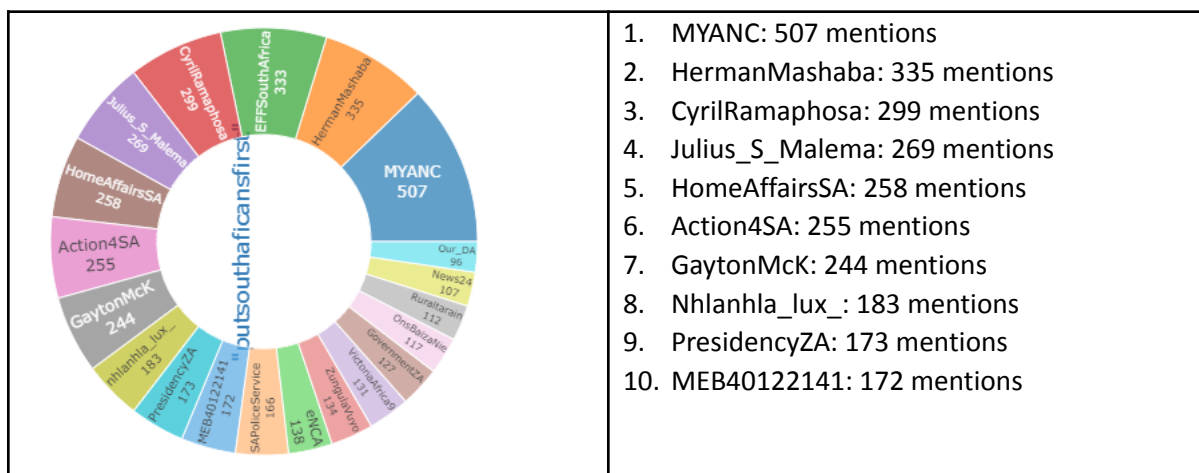


Figure 22: Most mentioned users using #putsouthaficansfirst

#operationdudula

The number of tweets with #putsouthaficansfirst for the period 01 January 2020 to 12 August 2023 was 11 375 (less than #putsouthaficansfirst). Refer to Figure 23. The number of retweets was 132 821 (more than for #putsouthaficansfirst). What this means is that the average number of retweets is higher for #operationdudula than it is for #putsouthaficansfirst. The average number of retweets for #operationdudula is 11 (compared to 7 for #putsouthaficansfirst). The tweets were liked 402 079 times (compared to 318 433 likes for tweets containing #putsouthaficansfirst). This means that tweets with #operationdudula in them gained a higher average engagement rate than those with #putsouthaficansfirst. This suggests that the Dudula hashtag, although used less frequently, displays a higher likelihood of a manipulated narrative.



Figure 23: Number of tweets containing #operationdudula and engagement with these posts.

In the propagation timeline for #operationdudula, there are noticeable peaks in retweets. This is a similar pattern to #putsouthaficansfirst. The hashtag emerged on 16 June 2021. The highest retweet peaks were in March 2022 and July 2022. #operationdudula emerged later than #putsouthaficansfirst.

Similar to the #putsouthaficansfirst propagation timeline, there has not been significant retweet peaks in 2023. This stands out in the timeline. See Figure 24. The peaks are comprised of:

- 24 January 2022: 8346 retweets of 676 tweets
- 7 February 2022: 11690 retweets of 1220 tweets
- 28 March 2022: 14506 retweets of 1204 tweets
- 11 July 2022: 11028 retweets of 1118 tweets
- 25 July 2022: 14230 retweets of 1313 tweets

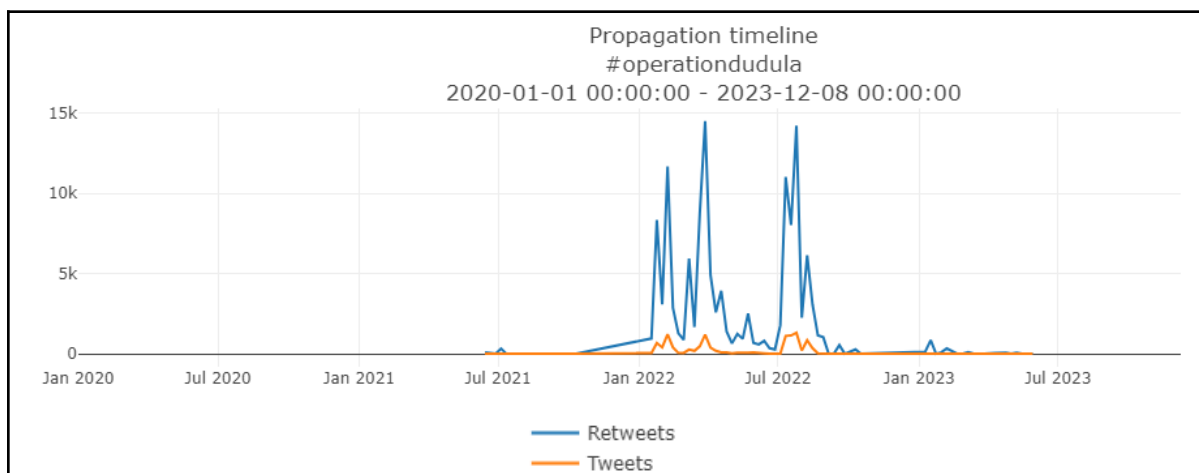


Figure 24: Propagation timeline of #operationdudula

In terms of the most retweeted users (see Figure 25), there is a notable overlap between the accounts that are being retweeted using #putsouthaficansfirst and those using #operationdudula. NkosinatiMagwa, 21_Be_Positive, Kea91492014 and ProkoreurG are in both top 10 most retweeted user lists. This suggests some connection between the use of #putsouthaficansfirst and #operationdudula that is worth exploring in further detail.

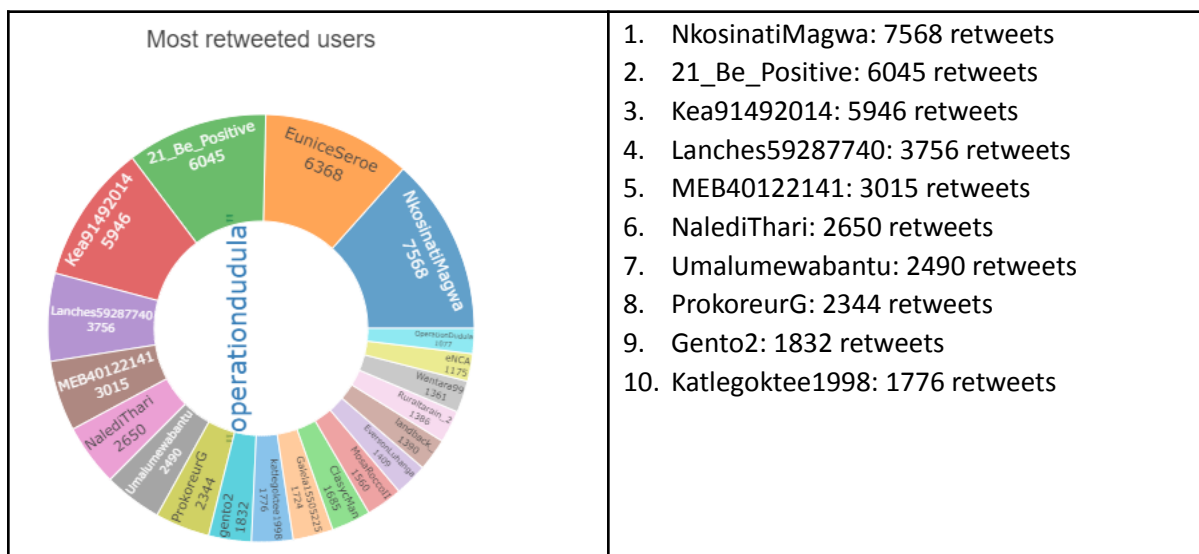


Figure 25: Most retweeted users using #operationdudula

In a similar manner, 21_Be_Positive, EuniceSeroe, Kea91492014, NkosinatiMagwa, ProkoreurG and Ruraltarain_2 are on both top 10 most liked users lists. Notably, Mario Khumalo and Gayton Mckenzie are not on the #operationdudula top liked list. In an Amabhungane's [article](#), which traces the origins of the organisations and parties that have been associated with different formulations of the slogan 'put South Africans first', the authors observe that "Piet Rampedi (editor in the increasingly RET-aligned Independent Media stable) has [reported](#) that Mario Khumalo's South African First Party was behind the #PutSouthAfricansFirst hashtag and that, although the party was registered in November 2016, the idea for the movement was first floated as far back as 2008 after the [xenophobic attacks of that year](#). In 2022, Mario Khumalo joined the Patriotic Alliance and his Twitter account acknowledges that he is part of Patriotic Alliance and SA First. Victoria Africa (whose full name is actually Victoria Mamogobo – see News24 [article](#)) also joined the Patriotic Alliance at the same time.

The reason for their absence from the #operationdudula most liked users list could be because Mario Khumalo and Victoria Africa joined the Patriotic Alliance and therefore Put South Africans First had a form of informal political alignment with the Patriotic Alliance through the membership of two of their leaders.

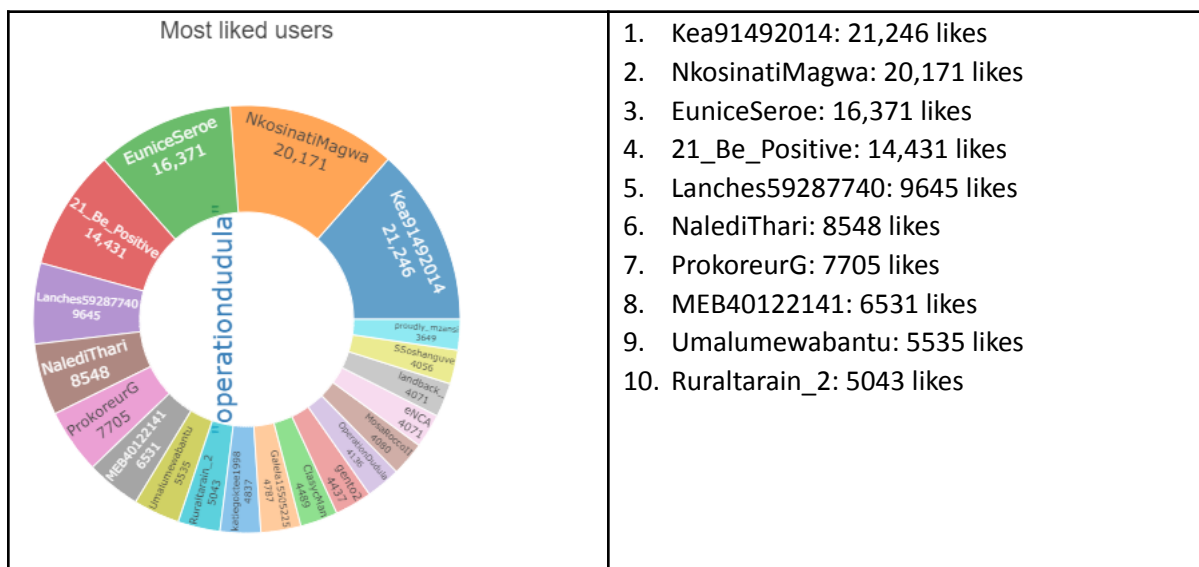


Figure 26: Users with most likes using #operationdudula

There are a few differences between the top ten most liked users list and the top ten most active users list (see Figure 27). Ms_ThabiA, NtsleniUnaado, Maphulumpana, Ancisacurse and Mbuso_siera do not appear on the most liked users list.

In terms of comparing the top 10 most active users lists for #operationdudula and #putsouthaficansfirst, the users on both lists are Kea91492014 and ProkoreurG.

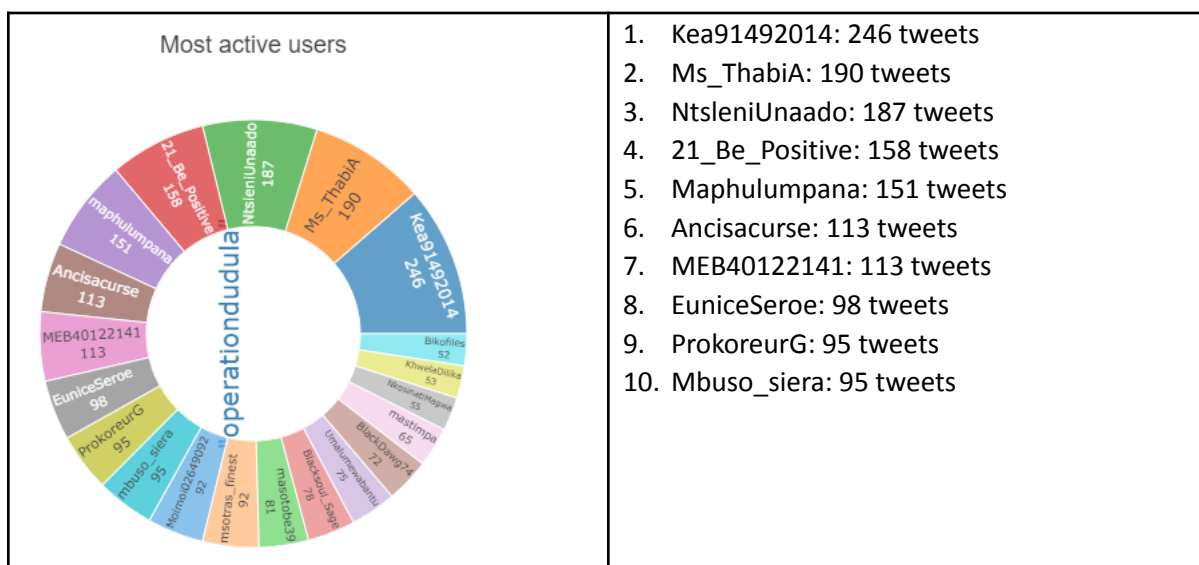


Figure 27: Most active users

With the most mentioned users (see Figure 28), the trend is similar for #operationdudula and #putsouthaficansfirst. Both lists contain the handles of political parties, their leaders and relevant government departments. There is a significant overlap in both of the lists, indicating that for #operationdudula, the aim of the campaign is also to influence the political sphere.

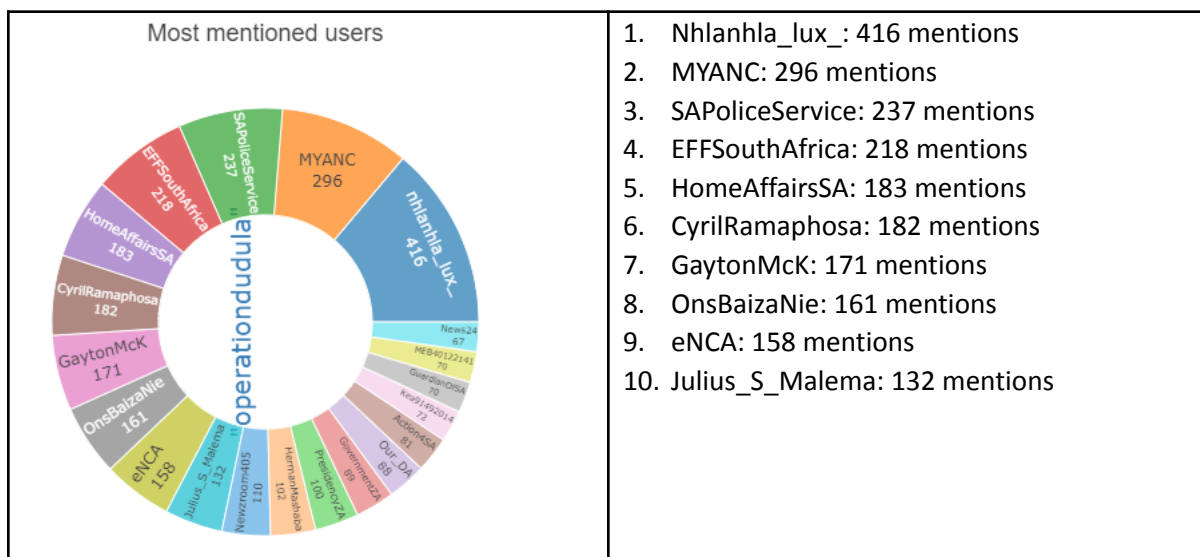


Figure 28: Most mentioned users

To summarise, the propagation timelines show campaigns that start in November 2020 (#putsouthaficansfirst) and 16 June 2021 (#operationdudula). 16 June is youth day, the day of the Soweto uprisings when 23 school children were massacred, while protesting for a better quality education¹⁰.

There is a significant amount of retweeting that has occurred in 2022, suggesting that there may be an influence operation that is being conducted. There is overlap for both hashtags when it comes to the lists of most retweeted, most liked and most mentioned. This is not consistent with the existence of two separate formations but rather suggests a relationship between the two campaigns. What also stands out is that many of the accounts are anonymous accounts where the actual user operating the account is unknown.

¹⁰ <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/june-16-soweto-youth-uprising>

10. Timeline of Major Events

Timelining significant xenophobic events provides some insight when identifying patterns and triggers that exacerbate tensions. The timeline in Figure 29 below provides a chronological overview of major xenophobic incidents that have occurred in 2022 and 2023.



Figure 29: Timeline of major events

For an expanded account of the major events, a longer synopsis of the timeline events is provided in Appendix A. A selection of news articles is provided to show the angles that the media covered.

The torching of trucks in July 2023 requires further analysis. A leaked report pins the blame on All Truck Drivers Forum and Allied South Africa (ATFD ASA) and Operation Dudula (see [here](#)). Operation Dudula has distanced itself from the attacks (see Eyewitness News [article](#)). It occurred relatively soon after the 01 June 2023 march to the Union Buildings.

11. Make Mzansi Great Again

This section explores the intersection of political agendas, militaristic influences and xenophobia. The Make America Great Again (MAGA) campaign that Trump used to run for office relied on an appeal to patriotism and othering of people of Mexican, Chinese and Muslim descent. Since non-nationals do not vote, this is an electioneering strategy that tends to work for politicians. It appears that in South Africa, non-nationals are similarly being scapegoated for a variety of societal challenges as part of the political jostling ahead of the 2024 elections. In Figure 30 below, there are a range of tweets containing references to 'Make Mzansi Great Again'. Note how these are paired with references to Operation Dudula and Put South Africa First. Accounts that tweet with 'patriot' messaging also frequently have the South African flag displayed in their account name, information or messaging. The use of the MAGA playbook is part of a possible explanation for the prevalence of xenophobic nationalism online.

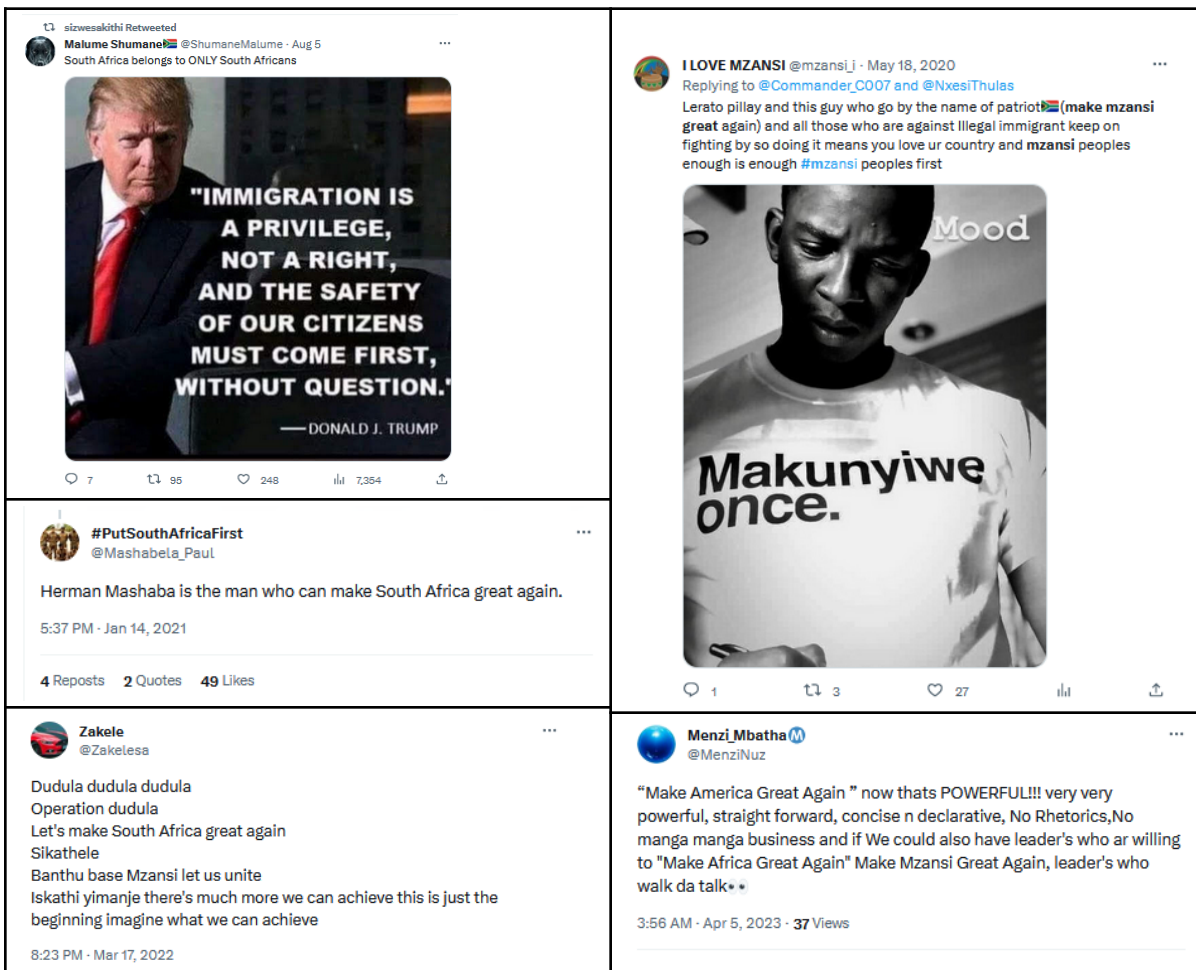


Figure 30: Examples of 'Make Mzansi Great Again' content

Operation Dudula and Put South Africa First have been at the forefront of pushing for stronger border management and the deportation of people who are illegally in South Africa. In doing so, their methods have included pushing the major political parties to take their stance. At the same time as pressuring other political parties to deal with foreign nationals, both Operation Dudula and Put South Africans First have political aspirations. In 2016, the South African First party was established by Mario Khumalo (see Timeslive [article](#)). Operation Dudula members contemplated at different junctures whether to register as a political party or to remain a pressure group. In May 2023, members made a decision to register as a political party and in September 2023, the IEC gazetted Operation Dudula as a newly registered political party.

In Figure 31 below on the left is an example of how the narrative about foreigners is used to agitate that the ANC align its stance on foreign nationals with that which Operation Dudula and Put South Africans First want it to take. In the pane on the right (see Figure 31), a Twitter/X user comments that ANC is now resorting to xenophobic tactics to gain votes. He pre-emptively guesses that the ANC might adopt the 'South Africa First' or 'Make Mzansi Great Again' slogan as a part of their 2024 elections campaign. This tactic of pushing the ANC into a position on policy matters is one which the EFF has used previously to get the ANC to take an EFF aligned position around land expropriation.



Figure 31: Examples of comments which give the impression of the ANC in a reactive position

12. Recommendations

Domestic recommendations:

- **In-depth Analysis of Interconnected Dynamics:** To address the complex interplay between xenophobic activities, political influences, potential funding sources, and the individuals and organisations involved, it would be beneficial to conduct further in-depth research. This research should delve into the connections between different actors and their roles, and the motivations and strategies driving xenophobic sentiments and actions.
- **Thorough Examination of Recent Events:** The burning of over 20 trucks in July 2023 represents a significant incident that warrants a deeper analysis. Exploring potential linkages between online dynamics and on-the-ground actions can provide valuable insights into the relationship between virtual rhetoric and real-world manifestations of xenophobia. This examination can aid in uncovering the catalysts that transform online discussions into tangible acts of violence.
- **Enhancement of Online Platform Moderation:** Advocating for the implementation of robust mechanisms to prevent xenophobic content online is essential. This involves urging online platforms to enhance their content moderation strategies, particularly in addressing hate speech and incitement to violence. Collaborative efforts between tech companies and civil society can lead to the development of effective algorithms and reporting systems to swiftly identify and remove harmful content.

Transnational Recommendations:

- **Global Engagement about Platform Governance:** South African officials and activists should proactively engage in advocating for improved international platform governance arrangements. By participating in international dialogues, conferences, and negotiations, they can contribute to shaping policies that foster responsible online environments and curb the spread of xenophobic narratives. Collaborative cross-border efforts are essential to ensure a unified approach towards tackling online hate and misinformation.
- **Regional and Global Cooperation:** While a focus on domestically on solving these challenges is important, broader regional and global cooperation is also required in order to address the reasons that people are seeking asylum in South Africa.

The recommendations presented above underscore the need for continuous research, collaborative action, and engagement at both national and international levels to effectively address xenophobia in South Africa. By analysing underlying dynamics, advocating for online platform improvements, and fostering global cooperation, meaningful strides can be made toward mitigating xenophobic narratives and promoting a more inclusive society.

13. Conclusion

The xenophobic landscape in South Africa presents a complex and problematic challenge. Hate speech and discrimination have led to numerous incidents of violence, with some formations organising as paramilitary groups and resorting to vigilante actions. Social media is being used to propagate prejudiced views against non-nationals. Xenophobia poses a significant threat to South Africa's democratic functioning. Xenophobia is having severe and far-reaching consequences, not only on the affected individuals and communities but also on the social fabric and overall human rights climate within a country. Furthermore, it is tarnishing South Africa's image and impacting on relations with neighbouring countries and countries further afield in Africa. Addressing xenophobia and combating these rights violations requires a concerted effort from governments, civil society, and international organisations to promote tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for the rights of all individuals, regardless of their background or origin.

In conclusion, the report has highlighted the influence of political motives in stoking xenophobic attitudes and incidents. The report underscores the importance of addressing the political causes of xenophobia to promote inclusivity, tolerance, and human rights within the country.

APPENDIX A

Timeline of major occurrences of xenophobia in 2022 and 2023¹¹

Date	Incident / event	News coverage
March 2022	Operation Dudula members engage in a series vigilante raids in Gauteng. OD members led by Nhlanhla Lux went to Victor Ramerafe's house and allegedly forced entry to search for drugs. EFF supported Ramerafe to lay charges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyewitness News article: EFF and ex-branch secretary Ramerafe turn to police after 'violent' Dudula raid • Eyewitness News article: EFF, Operation Dudula members face off over 'assault' of elderly in Dobsonville
24 March 2022	Nhlanhla Lux arrested on charges of breaking and entering and malicious damage to property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Citizen article: Operation Dudula leader Nhlanhla 'Lux' Dlamini has been arrested • News24 article: Nhlanhla 'Lux' Dlamini's arrest orchestrated by EFF, claims Operation Dudula • Timeslive article: Operation Dudula leader Nhlanhla 'Lux' Dlamini arrested • News24 article: Nhlanhla 'Lux' Dlamini pins his hope on housebreaking case being withdrawn
06 April 2022	Elvis Nyathi is killed in a vigilante act of 'mob justice' because as a foreigner, he failed to produce his passport in the middle of the night.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sowetan article: Reminders that tell tragic story of Elvis Nyathi's last moments • Mail & Guardian article: Mourners at Elvis Nyathi's memorial vent anger at Zimbabwe Ambassador service • Eyewitness News article: 7 men accused of killing Zimbabwean National Elvis Nyathi return to court • Daily Maverick article: Posts about the death of Elvis Nyathi stoke the flames of xenophobia (CABC analysis)
13 April 2022	Nhlanhla Lux hands himself over to police in connection with a 2019 case of common assault where he absconded from court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Citizen article: Operation Dudula leader Nhlanhla "Lux" hands himself over to police • ENCA story: Operation Dudula leader hands himself over to police again • The South African article: Nhlanhla Lux: Why did the Operation Dudula leader hand himself over?

¹¹ Also see Daily Maverick timeline:

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-04-19-timeline-of-hatred-and-death-xenophobia-and-south-africas-record-of-shame/>

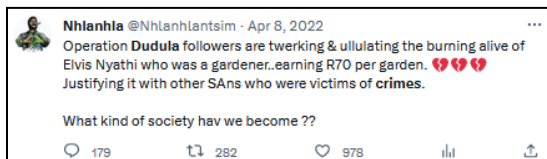
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> News24 article: Nhlanhla Lux Dlamini gets 'caution and discharge' sentence over 2019 assault trial no-show
25 July 2022	Nhlanhla Lux ends his time as spokesperson of Operation Dudula and announces that he will be focusing on Soweto Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SABC News article: Nhlanhla Lux to focus on Soweto Parliament: Operation Dudula Timeslive article: Nhlanhla Lux cuts ties with Operation Dudula — here's why
28 July 2022	<p>Krugersdorp gang rape blamed on foreign nationals prior to investigation</p> <p>The incident led to protests and a police operation resulting in the arrest of over 80 people mostly suspected illegal miners who were not immediately linked to the gang rape.</p> <p>Charges were withdrawn against 14 suspects who appeared on the gang rape charges due to lack of evidence linking them to the rapes. It would later emerge that a South African former police woman was linked to the planning of the crimes. To date it is not clear whether the actual perpetrators of the rapes have been identified and what their nationalities are. This may be due to the police having poor forensic capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily Maverick article: Krugersdorp victim's ordeal: 'I closed my eyes, crying. Moments later, I was also raped, by three men' News24 article: Krugersdorp rapes: What we know so far about horrific attack that shocked SA ABC News article: Anger, protests and clashes follow gang rape arrests in South Africa The South African article: Krugersdorp gang rape: Cele visits families, gives update on investigation The Citizen article: Krugersdorp gang rape: Charges dropped against suspected illegal miners Eyewitness News article: Rape charges withdrawn against 14 suspects in Krugersdorp gang rape case City Press article: Former cop linked to Krugersdorp gang rape 'guaranteed' film crew's safety
23 August 2022	Limpopo MEC of Health, Dr Phophi Ramatuba, video about the costs of treating foreigners in Limpopo hospitals goes viral. Ramatuba is a member of the ANC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The South African article: Dr Ramathuba: Department of Health responds to viral video Youtube link to video Jacaranda FM article: DA lays charge against MEC Phophi Ramathuba over Zimbabwe patient video Pretoria news article: Limpopo Health MEC Phophi Ramathuba to 'face the music' after remarks to foreign patient

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily Maverick article: Limpopo Health MEC Phophi Ramathuba's disciplinary hearing postponed to August
30 August 2022	Gayton Mckenzie, says he will rip oxygen masks off foreigners taking up hospital beds that South Africans should be using	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IOL article: WATCH: I'll switch off a foreign national's oxygen supply to save a South African, says PA leader Gayton Mckenzie News24 article: 'An incitement to murder': Gayton Mckenzie slammed over 'oxygen' comments Newzroom Africa interview: PHF calls for criminal sanctions against Gayton McKenzie
01 June 2023	Sisonke march to Union Buildings to hand over a memorandum about illegal foreigners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Citizen article: Pretoria streets affected by Sisonke 'illegal foreigners' march JacarandaFM article: Operation Dudula, host of organisations to march to Union Buildings on Thursday The Citizen article: Thousands march against illegal foreigners
10-16 July 2023	Over 20 trucks torched. Trucks driven by foreign nationals targeted. The army was deployed due to fears of unrest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> News24 article: Burning trucks linked to Zuma and Operation Dudula Independent article: South Africa deploys army over burning of trucks, braces for unrest over ex-president's court case The Citizen article: 'Foreign drivers' trucks targeted': Leaked report 'implicates' Operation Dudula, ATDF The Citizen article: KZN premier says torching of trucks could cost SA up to R60 million 702 interview: Leaked document implicates All-Truck Drivers Forum, Operation Dudula in attacks Eyewitness news article: Operation Dudula distances itself from truck arson attacks
19 July 2023	Johannesburg CBD gas explosion Some blamed the explosion on foreign nationals involved in illegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sowetan Live article: WATCH The moment Joburg CBD explosion happened

	<p>mining (zama zamas) prior to an investigation revealing that a methane gas build up following seismic activity was to blame.</p> <p>See Sowetan article as an example where an expert said illegal mining will cause Jozi to cave in.</p> <p>Similarly on social media there was a lot of scapegoating of foreign nationals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sowetan Live article: IN PICS Joburg CBD explosion aftermath • Malawi24 article: Malawian man dies in Johannesburg explosion • Daily Maverick article: Joburg CBD street collapses after explosion, residents instructed to leave area • Sowetan Live article: Illegal mining will cause Jozi to cave in – expert • Sowetan Live article: "Illegal mining did not cause the Joburg explosion"- City Manager • Business Day article: Zama zamas probably did not cause Bree Street explosion, says department • News24 article: EXCLUSIVE We finally found the Joburg explosion 'miracle man' – before he leaves South Africa
--	---	--

APPENDIX B

Additional examples of content that entails hate speech, disinformation and vigilantism



Hlathi Madela | SA Patriot Retweeted

PSAFLIVE @PSAFLIVE


BREAKING NEWS: Xolani a presenter of Sizokuthola is now targeted by the ANC government after exposing the scourge of drugs in South Africa. The president of ATM, Vuyo Zungula, pleaded with the Police Minister Bheki Cele to protect Xolani, this request fell into deaf ears.

Xolani has exposed how illegal Nigerians foreigners kill South Africans with drugs, this has angered a lot of Nigerian criminals in Nigeria, however, the ANC government fear that a lot of government officials will be exposed in drug trade.

This has resulted in an attempt to silence Xolani, linking him to an alleged murder case.

#HandsOffXolani

2024Isour1994



7:32 AM · Jul 23, 2023 · 714.1K Views

1,700 Reposts 92 Quotes 4,814 Likes 55 Bookmarks

D.Smith @DaleGoldsmith7 · Jun 19

This Guy is Hardworking with energy and commitment lets all come together and help Xolani Khumalo clean up! lets take south africa back from illegal Imagrants. Sizokuthola contact-079 303 5755 email:khumaloxh@gmail.com



Lerato Pillay and Operation Dudula

1 1 6 2,017

Hlathi Madela | SA Patriot Retweeted

iScathulo SePhara @ISephara · Jul 23

Dear South Africans, let's all agree:

If Xolani and #Sizokuthola crew are arrested then we must make sure no one votes for ANC or EFF in 2024 nationals elections.

We cant have someone who is dedicated to cleaning up SA be targeted and ill-treated, while politicians are quiet

328 1,052 4,073 169.6K

REAL 411 FIGHT DISINFORMATION TOGETHER

22:49

← Tweet

MASS PROTEST
SOUTH AFRICA IS FULL

#siyaya epitori
#SAMassProtest
#PutSouthAfricansFIRST

DO OR DIE FOR YOUR COUNTRY
To all illegal foreigners in South Africa, your deadline to leave our country is 30 JUNE 2023

WE ARE NO LONGER BE ACCEPTING ILLEGAL FOREIGNERS

• **VENUE:** Various Buildings
• **TIME:** 10:00 AM
• **DATE:** 1 June 2023

CALL NOW
081 212 5875

16 102 183 3846

Freeman Bhengu Retweeted

Sekwati mafoho
@abelmafoho

Replying to @zibuseman

Go to Helen Foundation offices and this @SECTION27news and burn it..

19:22 · 20 Apr 23 · 130 Views

Tweet your reply

Result

This content has been found to incite violence!

Twitter

Don't share the original posts but rather share this infographic to prevent harm and make our internet a safer space.

True as at 01/08/2023

Search #2841 on Real411.org.za for more info.



PSAFLIVE
@PSAFLIVE

WATCH: Diepsloot is burning, residents are chasing out illegal foreigners, it is said that illegal foreigners particularly Zimbabweans are on a killing spree, targeting mainly South Africans. The residents have vowed to continue burning Diepsloot until Ramaphosa pays attention, they said they don't want Bheki Cele and Aaron Motsoaledi as they have don't nothing to help them. We have seen similar scenes in Tshwane where residents are currently chasing out illegal foreigners, South Africans are Gatvol.



8:32 AM · Jun 21, 2023 · 458.3K Views

811 Reposts 148 Quotes 1,564 Likes 116 Bookmarks



Mystical Mysticus @MMysticus · Jun 23

Replying to @PSAFLIVE

Chase out all foreigners! Zims! Nigerians!!!! Malawians! all black kwerekweres!! we need only Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis, Dutch immigrants. Black foreigners are rapists, taking all our jobs, causing load shedding by sabotaging Eskom, Killing our women etc Make Mzansi Great Again.

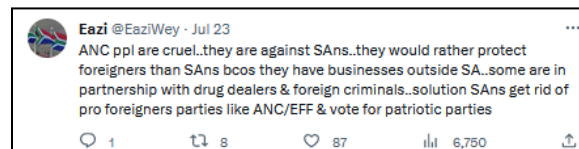
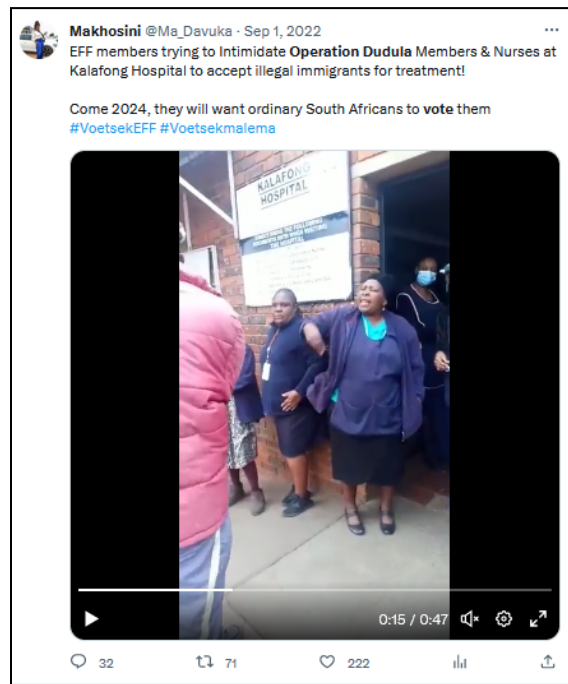
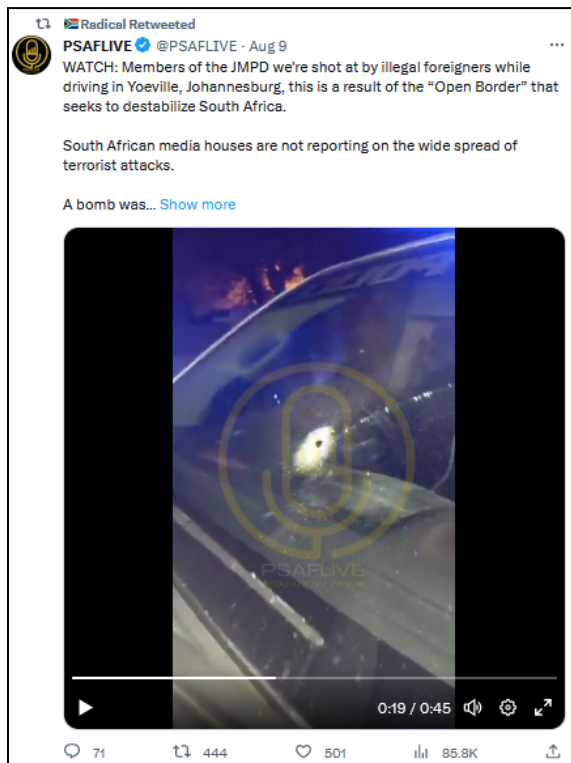
35



Sebata sa Mariri
@CliftonMalele

So the strategy is to use the big word Xenophobia, when it doesn't work demonize Dudula then threaten anyone who associate themselves with Dudula. Fuck this Stratcom tendencies.

7:58 PM · Apr 15, 2022 from South Africa



Molatelo @Mohleadi7

But why is Operation Dudula allowed to enter clinic and attack patients, this is unconstitutional and JMPD. It is your job to keep patients safe in Johannesburg, @Nicole_Fritz, @KopanangAfrica, @SERI_RightsSA, a case should be open against leaders of operation dudula.

6:10 PM · Mar 18, 2023 · 99 Views

PSAF_comrade @MalumSlash_SA · May 17, 2022

I dont think **foreign nationals** are aware about what's going to go down in 2024 #OperationDudula

11 61 287

Unathi Kalanga Ndebele @UnathiAfrika

This is precisely why some of us believe that Operation Dudula and PSFA are fronts designed to create Black on Black hate. The fact that your attacks are almost always coordinated with Stratcom media attacks. Kukhona okushayamanzi. And you may not even know.

7:47 PM · Jul 12, 2023 · 1,329 Views

14 Likes

Newroom Afrika @Newroom405 · Aug 31, 2022

#OperationDudula members block dark-skinned patients and staff from entering Kalafong Hospital. They also ask people to speak a South African language to confirm that they are not **foreign nationals**. Hospital CEO, Dr Sello Matijila elaborates.

Watch: bit.ly/3dYiyAi



2:01

15 27 17

eNCA @eNCA · Aug 31, 2022

Scuffles have broken out between members of the EFF and Operation Dudula outside Pretoria's Kalafong hospital. A group of #OperationDudula members allegedly turned away patients believed to be undocumented **foreign nationals**. #DStv403 #eNCA



IMMIGRATION DEBATE
DUDULA ALLEGEDLY TURNING UNDOCUMENTED FOREIGN PATIENTS AWAY FROM HOSPITAL

55 84 179

Operation Dudula @OperationDudula · Apr 18, 2022


Breaking News!!

We led a group to check allegations of cable theft in Pimville

Operation Dudula members were attacked by armed **foreign nationals**

Six injured and rushed to Bara hospital.

News that does not make headlines @eNCA #OperationDudula



226 574 1,209

Kgaugelo News Girl @KgaugeloKgaphol · Aug 30, 2022

#OperationDudula supporters are picketing outside the Hillbrow Health centre as part of their "awareness" on **foreign nationals** burdening the health system. @TimesLIVE



15 101 224

EWN Reporter @ewnreporter · Jul 22, 2022

A small group of #OperationDudula members gather outside Cape Gate Mall. Some members are carrying their CVs. They are demanding businesses in the area to get rid of undocumented **foreign nationals** who are working for them.



1 10 16

