



## Online Anti-immigrant Conversation Factsheet

### Overview

- The online anti-immigrant conversation on X (formerly Twitter) garnered more than 1.5 million mentions between 1 January 2025 and 5 June 2025. The highest peak was detected on 25 March, due to reports that a Zimbabwean man was arrested for allegedly killing five community patrollers in Soshanguve, Pretoria.
- Several events contributed to the second-highest peak, which occurred on 21 May. These include President Cyril Ramaphosa's visit to the United States, where he met with President Donald Trump to reportedly "reset and revitalise bilateral relations" between South Africa and the US. During the meeting, South African businessman Johan Rupert, who was part of the SA delegation, highlighted that claims of white genocide were unfounded as crime was not race-specific and occurred across the board. Rupert also highlighted crime and illegal immigrants among South Africa's main issues<sup>1</sup>.

### Popular accounts emerging in the conversation

- The @DelaKufaPatriot account has become one of those whose content is highly engaged within the online anti-immigrant conversation. Created in February 2024, @DelaKufaPatriot has targeted universities, making unsubstantiated allegations that they prioritised employing illegal immigrants over South Africans [1]; [2]; [3]. Several universities have responded to these allegations. Fort Hare University<sup>2</sup> issued a statement condemning the allegations as untrue and incendiary, further stating that 81% of its staff were South African. The University of the Free State<sup>3</sup> has also rejected allegations that it was prioritising immigrants over locals.
- During the research period, the account targeted government institutions, accusing them of similar employment practices [1]. The account has also called for a "referendum" where South Africans can either vote yes or no to immigrants being placed in refugee camps [2]. @DelaKufaPatriot also puts individuals' safety at risk by publishing the names of alleged immigrants online, often with unproven allegations made against them.

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<sup>1</sup> ['Death, death, death': setting the record straight on Trump's South Africa farm murder spectacle](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Fort Hare university debunks xenophobic posts on academic staffing, says 81% SA citizens](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Free State universities reject claims they favour foreigners](#)

## XDeport

- MojaLOVE recently launched a [show](#) to confront immigrants in South Africa called XDeport. Supporters of the show have been heavily critical of the police, accusing them of protecting immigrants at the expense of citizens. The show is allegedly in line with BCCSA standards, and according to Moja Love's Chief Legal Officer, Tumi Sole, the channel is committed to creating content that does not perpetuate harmful stereotypes about immigrants<sup>4</sup>. Conversation around #XDeport online mainly focused on commending the show for tackling issues of illegal immigration, with heavy criticism directed towards government and law enforcement for allegedly enabling the issue. #XDeport was among the most popular hashtags during the research period, with more than 6,000 mentions. [1]; [2]; [3]
- One of the questions raised in response to anti-immigrant groups/movements is why white immigrants were not being targeted. Engaging in the #XDeport conversation, the @Oracle5152 asked why white foreigners were not being deported because "it's not only black people who are foreigners in SA". Responses to this post highlighted stereotypical notions of Afrophobia. Responses below ranged from individuals stating that it was easier to find black immigrants; that white immigrants were investors, not foreigners; that they did not compete for the same resources as blacks, they didn't skip borders; and that they came to South Africa legally. [1]; [2]; [3]

## Attacks on NGOs

- A petition created on 17 May 2025, aimed at calling on the government to stop the Helen Suzman Foundation from operating in South Africa, gained popularity online. At the time of this factsheet, the petition had more than 11,000 signatures. In response to allegations that it was protecting migrants over South Africans, the foundation said that only two of the approximately 20 cases they have handled involved migration, and neither has involved undocumented or 'illegal' migrants [1]; [2]
- A case between several South African NGOs and Operation Dudula was among those spoken about during the research period. The NGOs, which include Kopanang Africa Against Xenophobia, argue that Operation Dudula is harassing immigrants in South Africa and interfering with their access to healthcare, among others. Although this occurred outside our date range, it was important to include, given that Operation Dudula has had an impact in perpetuating the online anti-immigrant sentiment.

## Analysis

The perceptions that CABC observed that South Africans have of immigrants in the online conversation are predominantly negative. Increasingly concerning is the disregard for facts and acceptance of unverified statements and information from high-engagement accounts in the

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<sup>4</sup> [Moja Love tackles illegal immigrants in XDeport](#)

online conversation to amplify anti-immigrant sentiments. The generally negative perception of immigrants and acceptance of statements prior to verification online raises a key question: Is verification being taken seriously? Efforts to combat xenophobia and misinformation are constantly undermined, with civil society organisations often accused of protecting the interests of immigrants over South Africans.

## **Recommendations**

- Social ills such as unemployment, crime, and access to public services often fuel xenophobic attitudes. Government can intervene by improving access to these services and working with communities to restore order by reporting perpetrators of crime.
- Individuals and organisations that counter xenophobia should receive greater support, instead of being perceived as unpatriotic. By monitoring online conversations, government and civil society can identify these individuals as allies, reach out to them, and, if willing, equip them with training and tools on how to engage in the conversation safely. Online communities, where people can engage in anti-xenophobia conversations without intimidation, can also be created.
- Civil society organisations can work in solidarity to raise awareness and challenge xenophobia through education and campaigns.