



SANTAC

Southern Africa Network Against Trafficking And Abuse Of Children

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PRESS STATEMENT

Maputo, 3 June 2008 – SANTAC Secretariat sent a letter to the South African government, as well as to other Southern Africa governments the message bellow, on violent acts and their consequences on immigrant communities in that country.

The Southern Africa Network against Trafficking and Abuse of Children- SANTAC-Secretariat in Maputo would like to express their deeply concern on the xenophobia violence against immigrant communities in several cities of South Africa.

This kind of actions always affects children, the most vulnerable members of society and attempts against the most basic human rights to life and dignity. Within this violence usually involves rape, sexual harassment and abuse of children. It calls upon us to raise public awareness of this stressor, and to ensure that wherever it occurs, it will be met with global condemnation.

Since the beginning of this instability, SANTAC members are involved on the ground, assisting and caring for affected communities in South Africa. Amongst the problems faced by our members, there are serious dermatological symptoms on children, some of them associated with the weather conditions and their state of weakness.

SANTAC requests to the Government of South Africa all measures to banish this violence, protecting all people - especially children and women - prosecute and punish perpetrators.

We similarly call for all Southern Africa governments to take immediate measures through the quick and accurate identification of all affected children for future follow-up and care services that eventually may require.

In the context of SADC regional integration, NEPAD and African Union, the same governments must immediately adopt and implement specific laws, promote bilateral and multilateral agreements to address the root causes of irregular forced migration, including smuggling and human trafficking that usually results not only on xenophobia and violence but, and above all, on economic and sexual exploitation, particularly on women and children.

SANTAC would like to stress that, within the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish in Case of Human Trafficking, particularly on women and children and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, all ratified by South Africa, the prevention and elimination of violence is a primary responsibility of governments and barbaric action requires “zero tolerance”. Humanity needs peace, Southern Africa too, “because there are no grounds for tolerance and no tolerable excuses”.

South Africa High Commissioner in Maputo already informed that would forward the letter to their government and South Africa as signatory of Geneva Protocol would fulfill the obligation to protect people from other countries living in their country.

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