

SA's top travel and tourism show will not be affected by xenophobic violence

All stakeholders should rest assured that despite the recent violence directed at foreign nationals, KwaZulu-Natal and Durban is open for business.

Our country stands firmly against all intolerances such as racism, xenophobia, homophobia and sexism.

We continue to condemn the senseless violence and call for constructive dialogue to take place. Government's interventions to ensure that all major business activities continue in affected areas are yielding positive results as more police have been deployed to arrest perpetrators involved in these criminal acts.

Premier Senzo Mchunu and Mayor James Nxumalo are engaging with communities and foreign nationals, promoting tolerance and social cohesion to deal with the root causes of the current situation.

Major events such as the Tourism Indaba, running from 9- 11 May 2015 in Durban will not be affected by actions of a group of criminals who undermine the rule of law.

The recent isolated incidents of violence should not deter exhibitors, buyers and delegates from the African continent and other parts of the world from visiting Durban and participating in the biggest travel and tourism show.

An inter-ministerial committee has been formed to combat the current wave of violence.

The committee consists of the departments of Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba, Police Minister Nkosinathi Nhleko and State Security Minister David Mahlobo, which would also advise on the best way to reintegrate displaced foreigners back into the communities.

Mahlobo said additional security personnel have been deployed not only to create a more stable situation in affected areas but to react swiftly upon receiving alerts of eminent violence before the incidents occur.

Yesterday, 16/04/2015 political leaders, clergymen, non-government organisations, religious and civil society groups united during the peace march organised by the KwaZulu-Natal government and denounced the violence that has plagued the City.

The march was to demonstrate that the majority of South Africans were against the attacks on foreign nationals and urge both locals and foreign nationals not to resolve to violence but to address issues amicably.

Mahlobo vowed that government is on top of the situation and that police will continue to monitor and fight the “criminal elements” in our society who do not want to see development in the country.

Mchunu has highlighted the role other African nations played in the liberation of South Africa. “By providing a platform for the activities of the liberation movement to continue, these African countries directly contributed to the attainment of our freedom in South Africa,” said Mchunu.

On behalf of the KwaZulu-Natal government Mchunu has also apologised to all foreign nationals in the country for the attacks they have suffered at the hands of criminals.

“Security is being tightened in Durban and neighbouring municipalities and we are receiving tip-offs about some groups that want the violence to continue. Those criminals will be dealt with,” warned Mchunu.

Nxumalo has given the reassurance that operations in Durban are beginning to normalise, therefore visitors and delegates should not change their plans to visit Durban.

“We have to maintain high levels of safety in our City. We are working with the Police to ensure that opportunistic criminals face the full might of the law,” said Nxumalo.

Nxumalo stressed that the Africa tourism market is very crucial for the economic viability of Durban. “In 2014, 13 percent of visitors from Zimbabwe came to Durban and 12 percent were from Zambia. Exponential growth is being recorded from most of the African cities. Importantly, Indaba 2014 gave a platform to 24 African destinations to do business with quality buyers, in an environment attuned to the remarkable inbound tourist growth of a continent,” he said.

Nxumalo added that these figures prove that Durban was part of a global village and therefore cannot grow and develop in isolation, but rely on foreign investment and support.

“It is business as usual in Durban and criminals who try to grind operations in the city to a halt will be brought to book,” said Nxumalo.

Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO Dumile Cele said they are saddened by the turn of events on the xenophobic attacks directed at fellow human beings, which have resulted in loss of life and property.

“Violence of any form is not acceptable more so when it results in the loss of human life. As a Chamber movement, we call for tolerance and understanding as we espouse free market principles,” she said.

Cele also said the chamber support Mchunu and Nxumalo in calling for tolerance and restraint.

“The Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry wishes to put out a call to all foreign owned SMME’s to engage in constructive dialogue with the Chamber in the hope of them becoming formally integrated into existing business structures available in the region. Though competition is rife, it is the

view of the Chamber that a harmonious business environment can still be enjoyed by both local and foreign owned businesses in this space,” she added.

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