



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

Press Release

No: MFA/PR/2026/118

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONDEMNS THE KILLING OF TWO NIGERIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Government of Nigeria strongly condemns the recent killing of two Nigerian nationals in South Africa. One victim, Emeka Charles Iroegbu, was reportedly killed by Tshwane Metro Police officers on 28th June 2026, in Sunnyside, Pretoria, using gruesome interrogation techniques. Earlier, on 20th April, 2026, these same officers were allegedly responsible for the extra-judicial killing of another Nigerian, Mr Nnaemeka Mathew Andrew Ekpenyong. His case is still pending; no arrests have been made, even though the four officers involved are known to the South African Police Service (SAPS).

The second victim, Mr. Musa Yunana Joe, popularly known as Big Joe, was killed in front of his shop on 28th June, 2026, in Witbank, Mpumalanga. Of great concern is that the killing was committed by yet-to-be-identified criminals. These two killings come at a time when foreigners are being unduly targeted in South Africa. This raises questions about deliberate attempt by some elements to wrongfully generalise and tag well-meaning, hard-working, and respectable Nigerians as criminals. It also raises further questions over the general safety of Nigerians and other foreigners in South Africa.

The continuing pattern of such terrible incidents is clearly evidence of complicity on the part of security operatives, especially officers of the Tshwane Metro Police, which raises the question of state responsibility under International Law. The recorded data collated by our Missions lays the grounds for criminal liability. It is a fact that South Africa currently has one of the highest rates of crime globally, including the culture of looting and mob action. Nigerians are more civil in our engagements with foreign nationals, and we always uphold the rule of law when dealing with illegalities. It is therefore unfair to target foreigners and make

them scapegoats of endemic socio-economic conditions that need to be addressed by the authorities.

Nigeria expresses great concern over the recently televised public statement by the spokesperson of the South African Government, asking Nigerians leaving the country due to the ongoing xenophobic protests to show where they hide illegal drugs. The unguarded public statements are unacceptable and are strongly condemned. Such derogatory, unprofessional and uncensored generalised public statements by highly placed government officials constitute hate speech that influences and incites negative and criminal actions against members of the Nigerian community. The gang leaders of groups such as March on March and Operation Dudula, who incite violence and hate against fellow Africans, will also be held to account as a matter of regional and international criminal liability.

The Government of Nigeria, therefore, calls on the South African authorities to conduct urgent investigations into the two killings and several other pending cases of extra-judicial killings of Nigerian nationals in South Africa, and ensure that the perpetrators of the heinous crimes are brought to justice without further delay. Our position remains that no matter what the allegations or suspicions may be, there are lawful processes and steps to justice. All must be presumed innocent and granted fair hearing in a court of law.

The Federal Government sympathises with the families and associates of the deceased and will continue to engage the highest authorities in South Africa until justice is served. With the volatile security situation, we appeal to our nationals to remain calm, law-abiding and security conscious, especially due to the ongoing xenophobic and afrophobic demonstrations in the country. They are advised to move to safer neighbourhoods and avoid areas that are prone to violent activities, while the Government continues to explore diplomatic solutions to address the growing scourge of Afrophobia in South Africa.

The Government of Nigeria wishes to reiterate the fact that there are numerous South African nationals and businesses operating safely in Nigeria without harassment of any kind. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the South African Government to protect the lives and properties of all foreigners, including

Nigerian nationals, living in the country. Therefore, the systematic targeting of Nigerian nationals who are legally residing in South Africa is not acceptable, and their safety should be guaranteed.

We wish to place the Government of South Africa on notice that if the situation continues to persist, all options remain on the table, some of which will be activated if the uncultured and provocative trend of intolerance and apartheid-style behaviour of South Africa against foreigners is not addressed.

The government calls on the general Nigerian public to remain calm and not take laws into their hands with retaliatory actions. We will continue to pursue dialogue and negotiations in the spirit of African unity, brotherhood and solidarity, which are the cornerstones of Nigeria's foreign policy in resolving the unfortunate developments.

Meanwhile, the evacuation process of registered Nigerians continues.

Signed:

**Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebienfa, anipr
Spokesperson
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja
Sunday 5, July 2026**